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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Renascence

THE literature of nations, so long as any of their members survive who had attained maturity during the course of the War, must inevitably retain a tincture of the psychology of that time. To have passed through the experience of those years is forever to have lost the pristine faith of youth in an ordered and glamorous universe, and to live on the edge of doubt as to the security of civilization. Yet to have come through those years to the comparative safety of the present, and to the normality that however it may seem regardless of the past is nevertheless the first necessity of the future, is to have rediscovered a harmony in existence. It is to have emerged from a chaos of emotion and action to a realization that whether human nature is improvable or not the only salvation for society is to proceed on the asumption that progress and not demoralization is the destiny of mankind.

The literature of the War years, especially their fiction, was largely a defeatist literature. Since all the fine fabric of hopes which humanity had painfully been building through the ages had fallen to pieces at an ultimatum, what could mankind look forward to but further failure in the future? What now were all the noble aspirations that would have builded for the lowly a world in which ease and opportunity were to be their portion as well as that of their betters? What but victrolas and silk shirts bought at the cost of rivers of blood? What were the applications of science which were to have extended the activity of men to unknown degree but the means to the slaughter of millions? What purpose was there to life if the end of endeavor was to extinguish life? Such was the creed of the post-war writers.

We talk of the smugness of ante-bellum literature, and decry the complacence of a mental outlook that sowed the seeds of disaster in the fatuousness of its own contentment, but there was an element in that literature without which no nation or literature can survive. It was the faith in the future of society, that faith in which the more fortunate struggled for the amelioration of the conditions of living of their less happy fellows and in which literature deemed the conservation of a rigid code of morality a matter of moment. Victorianism and post-Victorianism may have been narrow and prudish, unctuous and sometimes vicious under their sanctimoniousness, but it was less important that their standards of conduct were sometimes degraded by hypocrisy than that they should have had standards of conduct. If they were mistaken in their self-confidence, and sentimental in their yearnings, they were at least noble in their belief that humanity was capable of improvement and in their belief that good could be made to prevail.

It was inevitable, of course, that the disillusionment of war should bring about a pessimism as to society which literature, seizing upon more especially as the stuff for fiction, translated into a philosophy of despair. Writers, more particularly youthful writers, looking about them upon their world and finding it unlovely, and where not unlovely frequently dull, overlooked the fact that in that very dulness of propriety and narrowness which they despised lay the assurance of a stabilizing influence in social development. For the leaders guide, but the masses ballast, the ship of civilization. So long as great numbers of the people hold to a faith in right and wrong, and observe the codes and taboos of accumulated morality, society, though it may be intolerant, is not demoralized. It is still healthy at the core. That was what the post-war writers refused to see, and wherein lay their greatest weakness.

We labor the point because we believe that already the defeatist literature of the last decade is yielding to a less bitter crop. The literature of today is no less open-eyed than that of yesterday but it has a clearer vision. It sees not only the sloughs into which mankind can fall but also the inexhaustible springs of endeavor which feed its progress. It is recovering something of its lost faith. And in proportion as literature brings into conjunction confidence in humanity and knowledge of its shortcomings it becomes a fructifying influence on life.

Confession

By LEONARD BACON

I DO like gin and bitters, also pubs
Where one obtains such things. I do not care
Much for *vers libre*, or the divine despair
That troubles my contemporary cubs.
I like good meals in comfortable clubs,
Tobacco smoke azure in tranquil air,
And courteous men, who, with distinction, bear
Misfortune and her idiotic rubs.

And Oh my God! how I do love John Keats
And William Shakespeare, also William Blake,
And the first throb of the first thrush awake,
And winking Mary-buds that ope their eyes,
And slow cows coming home with dripping teats,
And emerald pastures under soaking skies.

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A new department, to appear weekly, on poetry and the criticism of poetry, by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

Classical and Romantic

By JOHN CROWE RANSOM

A GOOD many authorities have now assured us that science is simply the strict intellectual technique by which we pursue any of our practical objectives. The scientific consideration is always the technical consideration, which fixes narrowly on the road to some special goal. The perfect tribute to science is to say that, where it has elected to apply itself, it is efficient.

But there are one or two observations to be made about that. The first is that the reach of efficient science is, after all, very limited, and it seems useless to pretend that it is otherwise. It is perhaps in fashion now to assume that our sciences, because they have secured for us so many wonderful things that we may or may not have wanted, are able to furnish us with anything they please, including all the things that we do want. It is not a fashion which does us much credit. The wants which science is able to gratify for us are rather the minority of our wants; evidently they are only the simplest and most material wants; and elsewhere science cannot really do very much for us.

We must observe also that, however admirable we may consider efficiency when it is the property of a steam engine, or of a course of medical treatments, or of a servant, it does not necessarily impress us as an excellence when it is a property of our own psychic experiences. The experiences we have when we appreciate a work of art, or when we worship God, is quite different from the scientific experience, and often it seems preferable for that very reason. Such an experience is far from exercising our minds towards any productive accomplishment, yet we would defend it to the last as an indulgence to which we have a right; and very few of us would consent to abandon our minds wholly to the scientific regimen.

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Ardor and rigor, a fever and a coldness, attend the professional scientist on his sublime pursuit of limited and possibly ridiculous objectives. He burns as he contemplates the goal of his desire. But with the coldest self-denial he turns from every innocent phenomenon that rises out of the fertility of the world to draw his attention towards the roadside.

The works of art are psychic exercises which are just so many rebellions against science. Together they constitute the formidable reproach which a disillusioned humanity has had to cast at the scientific way of life. At any rate, that is the thesis which frequently occurs to me, as one that is eminently reasonable, and easy to maintain.

Here I wish to refer particularly to two kinds of literary art, the classical and the romantic. They seem to represent the two inevitable forms of the revulsion against science. I am not deterred by the fact that these terms look tolerably unprofitable at first sight, being large and loose, pulled and stretched in too many ways already. Classical and romantic mean a great many things, all of them backed by good authority; there may have been distinguished as many as fifty-seven varieties of either. Under the circumstances there is some temerity implied in the offer of a new pair of definitions; but at the worse it will only increase the fifty-seven by a fifty-eighth, and at the best our new pair may include some meaning now separate, and actually reduce the total number.

Science is the mind devoting itself exclusively to the attainment of a practical purpose. Now there are two events in the history of any practical purpose which equally are critical, and equally dispose us to revise downwards the hopeful valuation which

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we have placed upon our program. The first is failure; the second is success. Let us consider some one purpose, and trace its career briefly through both events in turn; and let us take the sexual purpose, for the sake of a most distinguished example.

Let us imagine a hero in love; and for the first case, a lady who does not return the compliment. It must not be required that he should love her quite unselfishly, of course, for lovers never do; it is enough that he desires her powerfully, and in the sense which is biologically important, among whatever other senses. He does not desire that she should continue to exist on earth in order that he may regard her beauty, but that she should marry herself, most circumstantially, to him. But she refuses to gratify this desire. For the sake of the example, he is a lover of heroic constancy, and no other lady will do. He therefore tries in every way possible to win her, applying all his wits to the task, and resorting to persuasion, force, and guile; but after a certain number of years of failure he accepts his defeat as definitive.

Now in the degree that he is a hero, with a grand passion in which the other interests of his life are "sublimated," this defeat is crushing. It means to him that the objective world is simply not tractable to his desires. It is a painful lesson. It touches him so deeply that—if we follow the most approved legends—he suffers a complete metamorphosis. Taught by failure, he renounces the practical life so far as possible, and turns into the embittered cynic, or the stoical philosopher, or the grim tragic artist, or the ascetic religionist. He consents under his grievous compulsion to the radical doctrine that the world is not operated on humane principles, is not in sympathy with human needs. He spends his time now in contemplating the vanity of human aspirations, and in confessing to an invincible universe and its inscrutable God.

But in the second case, we are to suppose that the lady accepts him, and he accomplishes his purpose. This case is much the more remarkable for theory. He will now have the opportunity of learning what there is to lose by success. For oddly enough, he
[illegible]ose only by the failure of his practical
[illegible]e is cheated also in their success, and he
[illegible] creature whose strange constitution will
not permit him to find his happiness in either event.

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Let us go back a little upon his history. Sex awakened late, when the organs of his general sensibility were well developed and capable of forming the most compound images of objects. Furthermore, sex as a purpose defined itself with an immense leisure, taking, in fact, the whole protracted period known as adolescence. It was therefore specially privileged among his natural purposes. No other one served so gay and irresponsible an apprenticeship as it played among those infinites of qualities which composed the objective world. In the beginning the love-interest had the widest application, seizing on all sorts of objects compounded brilliantly of their colors, forms, odors, sounds, sense-qualities,—dwelling almost aimlessly, like an interest that was not at all pointed, on the pure particulars of experience. But its inevitable destiny was in the direction of an increasing condensation. Presently it had limited itself to that smaller world —which was still an infinite world—that clustered about the beloved one: her history, family, possessions, dress, gestures, words, person. And eventually it arrived at an astonishing degree of exclusion. Love at last defined its specific objective, and its technical or scientific procedure; the lady consented; and desire is consummated.

The fact which probably presents itself now is this, that the lover will remark how disproportionate is the actual consummation to the vast set of interests which it climaxes. The world of love and loveliness, which took the years of his courtship in the building, has unbuilt itself. In the course of its progress it has ascended by a series of diminishing planes like a pyramid and whittled itself down, so to speak, into an effectual point. But this point, in the poverty of its dimensions, is absurd as the ultimate outcome of his program. Love has put away its youthful indeterminism and turned decisively into lust; and the beloved with her manifold of charms has vanished, shrunken into the excessively finite object of an extremely special desire.

It is doubtless for some such consideration as this that the act of love has often seemed shameful to lovers of delicate sensibility. They may take some comfort in the thought that this act is not at all unique in that character, for every other program of action is blind and exclusive and involves itself in a similar anti-climax. Every science, for example, is a technique of heroic indifferences and proceeds to its point by a set of unscrupulous exclusions and the abuse of sensibility; and the knowledge which is scientifically the most effectual is for metaphysics an absurdity, and for religion an impiety.

My illustration is completed at this point, and I cannot undertake the task of redeeming this cheated lover. I do not suppose that his present embarrassment is fatal. His situation is perilous, however. He will have to see if he cannot recover love in its lovely or romantic sense, and stay in love even after marriage has taken place.

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Classical art, as I venture to take it, deals with the first of these two situations: the defeat of human purposes. It conducts a sort of experiment in which a purpose is tested to determine whether it is really a practicable purpose. It is like the scientific verification of a practical formula. Through previous unfavorable experience we are aware of the hazard attaching to the formulas by which we would realize our desires. Of course we expect that now the formula will be tested impartially and dispassionately to see if it will work. Hence the representation of what is supposed to be the actual course of nature in order to compose a classical work of art.

And it is not to be denied that the formula is sometimes shown in this representation to prosper. The work of art ends happily, and we are permitted to include the formula all the more confidently in our repertory, and to come away greatly uplifted as we contemplate our evident ability to enforce our private purposes upon nature. Such art as this is classical comedy. We content ourselves with the flattering demonstration that we are on the right track, and can go ahead. In a comedy we have a hero acting on moral principles very like our own and turning out quite successful. We also have generally a villain, who acts on principles precisely opposite to our own; it is as important that the wrong principles should fail as that the right ones should triumph. We may also have a few clowns and fools, naturals and originals, who expect to prosper in this world without any principles at all; but these suffer all sorts of buffets and indignities, if not actual adversities, and testify to the need of having some strenuous principles. And so is established, so far as the evidence of a comedy goes, one proposition with two corollaries. Proposition: Our formula is the sufficient cause of prosperity. Corollaries: The opposite formula is not the cause of prosperity but of its opposite; and, The absence of formula is not the cause of prosperity but of its absence. The total effect is sweeping.

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But this is the least intelligent and the most dubious of all the forms of art, notwithstanding the favor with which it will always be held by the softer side of the population. It is more characteristic of the classical artist to exhibit the formula as unsuccessful. Classical art becomes tragic art in the hands of the serious artist. He is the artist who submits the formula to such a searching and sustained experimentation that finally he comes to the place where it breaks down. In tragic art the distinction between the hero and the villain tends to disappear, for their formulas issue equally in failure. As for the ridicule which had been intended for the clown, it tends to symbolize the ridicule which lies in wait for all our fumbling human behavior whatsoever, so unable it is to cope with actual events. But the consequence of the tragic outcome is still quite practical: we are convinced that defeat is in store for us and that we had better be prepared to accept it as a regular feature of life. To abridge a famous classical passage:

> Therefore, since the world has still
> Much good, but much less good than ill,
> I'd face it as a wise man should,
> And train for ill, and not for good.

Practical science has constructed, let us imagine, a bridge, and classical art tries the bridge. (Mr. Thornton Wilder tried a bridge, and was to that extent a classical artist.) This bridge is observed at length to collapse under its precious human freight. Evidently scientific bridges are not to be relied on. But a code of morals is also a scientific construct, of much more importance than a bridge; so the tragic playwright embodies this code in a hero, who practises for us vicariously the ideals by which we would pursue our happiness. The hero is defeated and, lest there be any question of the finality of this outcome, is killed. Death is the grimmest possible symbol of defeat. It may be superfluity for those who are quick at inference, and Œdipus Tyrannos goes off stage for the time being merely stripped of his kingdom and honor, but Shakespeare takes his tragic heroes more speedily to their mortal end. The lesson of these representations is that a code of morals is not an instrument by which we can guarantee our prosperity in this life.

Technically speaking, the purpose which we would accomplish, through our careful scientific formulation, is defeated always by interferences which could not be predicted, and which may therefore be called contingent. The bridge for some surprising reason did not bear the strain which the best of calculation said it would bear; its hard stone disintegrated, or its steel suffered a crystallization, or an enemy undermined it, or a geological cataclysm loosened its foundations. As for the moral ideal of the hero, it was not good enough after all, whether for inner reasons (the unsuspected tragic "flaw") or because of an outward circumstance that hit him when and where he could not anticipate. Science is a calculation which leads from one step to another by a theoretical necessity, and there are people who cannot see why a perfect efficiency is not its goal; but the bridge it raises or the character it forms is enveloped in a contingency that may at any time choke it up. The practical processes are like a thin stream of history whose materials seem perfectly under control. But the materials after all are not fully understood, and in any case the stream flows through an indifferent universe whose irruption at any point may shatter its continuity.

Probably this is not a highly contemporary doctrine. In these longitudes and in these times the public does not conspicuously ask to receive the lesson of tragedy. We perform wonderful feats in the laboratory and we live in cities made marvelously with hands; we are able to gloze certain facts very obvious to more primitive societies which have never lost contact with earth and the elements, or to older societies who have tasted many defeats. The Genius Loci under the circumstances refuses rather flatly to make the spirit of tragedy into its adoption. On the contrary, it is our public policy to advertise all the positive achievements and to prattle very innocently about man's imminent and even actual control over nature. But there have not yet been eliminated those contingencies that lurk in natural catastrophe, disease, death, envy, and competition.

The friends of science are very busily celebrating its recent triumphs. Physical science has done much to talk about, and biological science and social science are not far behind, at least in the talking. But nature, the total environment which we have to manage, is still the Djinn of the fairy tale, and science is only the golden-haired boy who pursues him. This young prince is armed with a bottle and a stopper; it is his intention to get the Djinn into the bottle and then put in the stopper. Perhaps he will set the bottle on his laboratory shelf and, letting out the Djinn's power through a control valve, perform wonders of safe magic. The sympathy of the public goes out wholeheartedly to the brave prince. But there must be some hard-headed realists to whom his undertaking seems slightly absurd.

The moral of tragedy is not the failure of the specific program, perhaps, so much as it is the failure of programs generally, on the realistic principle that calculation can never allow for the infinite contingency with which the objective world is invested. Sooner or later we shall have to make an adaptation to the world which is submissive and religious, as well as an adaptation which is egotistical and scientific.

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The principle that the world is invested with contingency is a principle that we admit ruefully, when we are compelled by a tragic experience. Even so, classical art leads us into metaphysics at last; for it is metaphysical to confess that things are in themselves, when seen fully and objectively, rather more than the simple-featured and manageable entities which our formulas would represent them as being.

On the other hand, romantic art is metaphysical by preference, and from the beginning. Indeed its favorite origin is probably in that hour of disillusionment which follows upon the absolutely successful accomplishment of some purpose. We have pursued this purpose too hard, and now we have eaten greedily of the fruit. But while the organ of appetite is sated and full, we are wretchedly conscious

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that our minds are empty; we have snatched our morsel from the delicate banquet of nature like a slave rather than a guest, and devoured without taste and without enjoyment. Desperately we seek to repair our ill breeding, and we go again to nature in order that we may prove ourselves more humble, temperate, and attentive. We solicit the pure esthetic experience such as is expressed in romantic art. We are like Lord Byron, who expiated his grievous personal sins in pictures of true romantic love.

In more exact language, I would denote by the term romantic, as a quality in art, just that rare and simple attitude which we call the love of nature. And that means the love of anything for itself. Science is pragmatic, and bent only on using nature. Scientific knowledge is no more than the knowledge of the uses of nature; it does not credit nature with having any life of its own, and it cannot afford to see in nature any content further than what the scientific terms permit. As a way of knowledge it is possible to us only on condition that we anesthetize ourselves and become comparatively insensible. But it is immediately exposed to scorn when we consent again to free our senses and contemplate those infinites of particularity which are the objects in our world; the landscapes, the people, the flora, the merest things. This is the purest esthetic experience.

Hence the images, the representations by imitation, or romantic art. They aim at being representations which, short of the actual objects themselves, are the fullest possible, and are indeed of infinite fulness. To make them is no matter of practical interest but a labor of love.

Classical art is the criticism of science by science's own standards, witnessing to its failure or success in attaining the purposes at which it aims. But romantic art goes rather deeper, and suspends the whole purpose-and-attainment process.

* * *

This general distinction produces some of the famous differences between classical and romantic art. Classical art pursues a thread of history with classical severity, like a scientific experiment with a hypothesis and a demonstration, but romantic art is essentially diffuse. Classical art gives us emotionally either the shallow self-confidence of comedy, or the bitter resignation of tragedy; but the romantic equivalent for the latter is that nostalgic melancholy with which we survey the estrangement wrought by our practice between ourselves and nature, and for the former the pure joy of knowing the world in its fulness, and without desire. Classical art induces religion in a masculine, stoical, and compulsory phase, but romantic art is religious in a feminine, spontaneous, and loving phase. On the whole, classical is perhaps to a large degree the art of antiquity, crystallized in literature in such forms as the heroic epic, the grim ballad, and the tragic drama; romantic art gives us the performance which is characteristically modern, with heroes who are particular rather than typical, lyrics that are scientifically without point, informal essays, and formless novels.

Romantic features often hide, of course, in works that are classical by intention. The modes come generally mixed. I will mention two romantic features that are almost universal in literature.

Any lyrical passage, even from the most classical context, reveals the romantic spirit if we care to construe it as follows:—it escapes the bounds of the argument. It invites excursions of the mind into many directions. It indicates vast territories, not for conquest and use, but for exploration and delight. More technically, the lyric passage forgets the essential logic of the artist's thesis and releases his sensibility to write its diffuse record of the moment while the scientific record must wait, or at least be obscured under the other.

A second such feature, found commonly in classical art, is a simile, or metaphor. A simile looks like a logical feature meant to illustrate the logic of the account. Scientific texts themselves abound in similes. For instance, in stereo-chemistry a molecule might conceivably be described as cruciform in the arrangement of its component atoms; but no reference would be intended to the massive legendary mysteries of the cross. Literary similes, on the other hand, have precisely such excursions in view; for instance, the wine-dark sea of Homer, and the ox-eyed Hera, and the silver-footed Thetis. These epithets have no necessary relevance to Homer's narrative logic where they occur, and so far as we attend to them we plunge into a pure unmotivated image. Some other poet will elect to know the beloved's lips as cherry-red, not to secure definition of their hue, but to provide a second field of observation for us to enter, and to make definition actually impossible. From the same motive her eyes are like stars, and her throat is a swan's. Nothing is more ridiculous than to take these figures literally as scientific or descriptive terms. On principle they are not clarifying but obfuscatory, they bring a nimbus and not a light.

Perhaps no works of art are pure romances. Even a brief, non-philosophical lyric, or a novel without topical unity, offers necessarily a minimum of logical sequence; the pedagogical mind may be trusted to find it there. Most works of art are doubtless compromises whereby we indulge science and sensibility, or pursue thesis and romance, in alternating moments. That element in them is romantic which is diffuse and particularistic and dwelt upon in love, and they are on the whole romantic if that element is the more favored.

It is idle to speculate on whether Shakespeare is more romantic or classical; it is enough to see that he is both. He surrenders the excellence of a cold, classical precision whenever, for instance, his quick imagination leads him to *enter* the puppets that might have been the perfect carriers of his tragic thesis. For then they become alive, and live; that is, they depart from the finitude that classical theory intended for them and become particulars, persons, intractables, and infinites. The insubordination of the chief character in Hamlet does not improve the work as a classical tragedy, while it furnishes an excellence that a pure classic could not possess. Furthermore, Shakespeare devotes a vast attention to the presentation of a fairly unclassical thing: romantic love. He conceives romantic love at least as grandly as did the neo-Platonists, and is one of the chief of those who have made the literary term romantic almost impossible to dissociate from the popular term by which we denote true love; even comedy is saved at his hands by being bathed in romantic love. But romantic love in this special sense is only one aspect of the romantic love of nature which we find everywhere indulged in his plays. All these romantic features constitute in Shakespeare a deformity upon the body of the classical Aristotelian drama.

We entertain by reason of our constitution very ardent practical desires, and it is well that classical art should try them and speculate upon their practicality. But romantic art is not at all concerned with this issue. In romantic art we revel in the particularity of things, and feel the joy of restoration after an estrangement from nature. The experience is vain and aimless for practical purposes. But it answers to a deep need within us. It exercises that impulse of natural piety which requires of us that our life should be in loving *rapport* with environment.

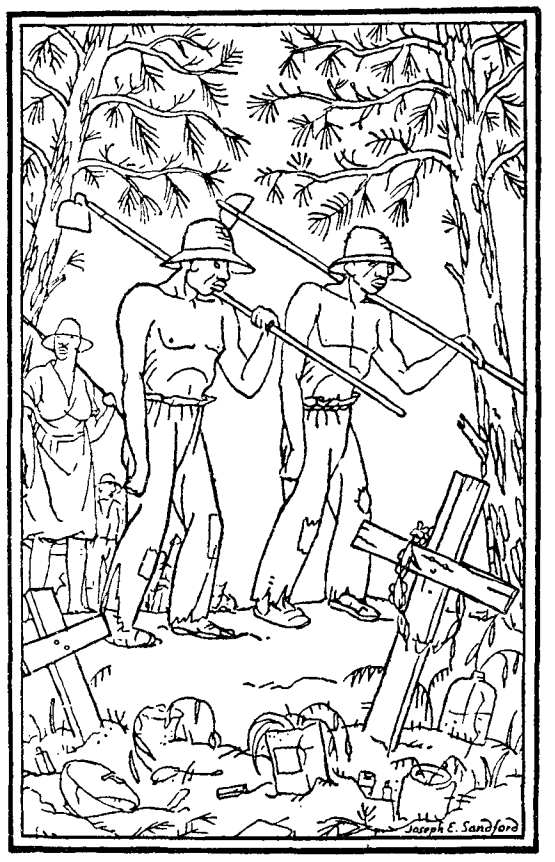

Illustration from "The Half-Pint Flask," by DuBose Heyward (Farrar & Rinehart).

Gossip About Rockefeller

JOHN D., A PORTRAIT IN OILS. By JOHN K. WINKLER. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1929. $2.25.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

TWENTY years and more ago, when Miss Tarbell published her classic work on the Standard Oil Company, at a time when the trust movement was rising to its height, and before Roosevelt and the panic of 1907 had partly tamed big business, Rockefeller's name was one which possessed unpleasant connotations. Most Americans pictured him as a rapacious and cruel monopolist, who had built up his vast fortune on the ruin of hundreds of men and at the expense of the public. He had unquestionably used force, duplicity, special privilege, and hard dealing to attain his wealth; he had been a debasing influence on the business ethics of the country and most right-minded men condemned him. Mr. Rockefeller has since, in the Scotch phrase, been making his soul. Vast benefactions, planned with intelligence and imagination by Frederick T. Gates and others; the shrewd publicity work of Ivy Lee; and interest, creditably courageous, in liberal religion, and the mellowing effects of time, have softened the harsh lines of the old picture. Like Chauncey Depew, whose past had equally discreditable passages, Rockfeller grew out of ill-repute into national tolerance and even a measure of national liking. His pride in his ninety years, his dimes, his golf, his careful dieting, a hundred other facts constantly emphasized in the press, have made him a picturesque figure. This volume is one evidence of the new and milder public attitude toward Mr. Rockefeller.

Mr. Winkler has not attacked or exposed the elder Rockefeller, or made him the subject of our modern "irony;" he has given us a volume of gossip, good-natured and shrewd if not urbane or dignified, about the man, and his family. It is never of much importance, and the taste is not always impeccable, but the author at least cannot be accused of unkindness or unfairness. The only malicious touches are in the sketches of the elder Rockefeller's father, an amusing and likable quack who posed as a "celebrated cancer specialist" and whose rather obscure career has been kept as obscure as possible by his descendants. Mr. Winkler regards the elder Rockefeller's business achievements, as he should, with respect for their size and importance. Not only does he regard the earnest and virtuous John D. Rockefeller Jr. with respect, but he speaks in terms of praise of the Rockefeller policy in the Colorado mines. Of the business history of the Standard Oil Company he gives us a lively and amusing but not penetrating or thorough account; and anyone who wishes to know how our first great monopoly was formed and grew will learn far more about it in Mr. Gilbert Montague's little book than in these pages. But Mr. Winkler does sketch for us in fairly vivid fashion the personality and chief traits of Rockefeller. He shows us his insatiable passion for money, his zeal for efficiency, his Machiavellian talent for intrigue, his ability to select aides almost as shrewd and efficient as himself—Harkness, Flagler, Payne, Archbold, and the others. He has found anecdotes to illustrate Rockefeller's peculiarities which chime aptly with the few personal anecdotes to be found in Miss Tarbell's book. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the story told of the early years by a literary-minded neighbor of Rockefeller's in Cleveland:

> In the half darkness he would talk—talk of money, always of money. The single time he referred to books was characteristic. The visited bookworm sat with his finger keeping the place in a volume of Moore's "Life of Byron." Rockfeller noticed it.
>
> "You get pleasure out of your books, judge?" he said musingly.
>
> "Yes," responded the bookworm.
>
> "Do you know the only thing that gives me pleasure?" asked Rockefeller, looking up with a fashion of guilelessness, at once sly and bland. "It's to see my dividends coming in," he whispered; "just to see my dividends coming in!" And as he said it he made a drawing, scraping motion across the table with his scooped hand, as though raking in imaginary riches.

It is in the later chapters that the triviality of a great deal of the gossip becomes annoying. The number of horses at Pocantico Hills; the routine of the estate work; when Mr. Rockefeller Sr. rises, what he eats, what he wears, when he retires; his interest in turkies, in fast-driving chauffeurs, in trees, in golf-sticks; the kinds of exercise taken by John D. Rockefeller Jr.; the Bible class, and so on and

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so on—it grows irritating, and as we have said, some of it is in poor taste. The almost Spartan discipline to which the children and grandchildren have been subjected is recounted. We are not even spared the story (told with popularly 3,000 variations) of how one of the younger Rockefellers, asked by a playmate why the family did not buy some luxury or other, demanded: "Great Scott! What do you think we are—Vanderbilts?" Not all the details are accurate. But it is on the trivial gossip that this hastily-made book will sell.

Islam at Its Best

A BAGHDAD CHRONICLE. By R. Levy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (The Macmillan Co.) 1929.

Reviewed by Kenneth Saunders

"IF this is the Garden of Eden it's no wonder the disciples 'ooked it," said the British Tommy as the transport (lately a Thames Penny Steamer) shouldered its way up the shallow winding stream of the Tigris towards Bagdad.

And his officers, only a little more sophisticated, said that if the glories of Harun al Rashid were departed the "Forty Thieves" remained and prospered.

A few, like our author, studied and pondered the fascinating story of "The Land of The Two Rivers," and there were notable experts like Gertrude Bell among the "politicals," ready with encyclopædic and intimate information.

These four groups—the vast uneducated mass, the dimly enlightened, the studious, and the profound, represented humanity at large in its ignorance and its knowledge—the latter a microscopic island in the vast ocean of the former. Since the War Bagdad has become a centre of interest, and Mr. Levy's learned yet popular work is very timely.

It is a history of Bagdad under the Abbasid Caliphate—which lasted from Mansur who founded this "City of Peace" with due ceremony in the eighth century A. D. to its conquest after many sieges by the Mongol, Hulagu, five centuries later. To tell this story, to illuminate its battles with tales of its high culture and notable persons, to give a background to the vivid life of the "Arabian Nights"—this is a difficult and complex task. Mr. Levy lectures in Persian in the great School of Browne and Nicholson at Cambridge, is well qualified to do it, and he has given us another valuable chapter in the history of the Orient.

Lit up as by a flare in the Great War the city of Harun al Rashid was revealed as a rather squalid and pathetic huddle of mud houses and narrow streets which the pedestrian shared with camels, mules, and coolies as heavily laden and as patient. These Mr. Levy makes vivid to us—and the shrouded women crowding the lines to the riverside, and the mixed crowds of the bazaars. The pageant of the "Arabian Nights" passes before our eyes.

And to understand it all one must go with the author back beyond even the past of the Caliph's to Sargon, to Babylon, to Ctesiphon, and then realize that this little city had outlived them all. Its site by the Two Rivers is one explanation—another is its high civilization under a series of strong rulers. Some of these—with their social as well as their political history—Mr. Levy paints for us: the great Harun notable amongst them, and Shapur who made it a famous centre of scholarship and the arts. Poets and princes, merchants and scholars, eunuchs and slaves throng these pages, which are illuminated by many a good story and by new bits of biography. We read of adventures in law and in learning as well as of harems and banqueting-halls.

The "City of Peace," in a word, was at its zenith a great centre that attracted the learned from all over the Moslem Empire, and beyond. Here Christian, Jew, and Moslem were free at times to make their own contribution to learning—the ubiquitous Nestorian doctors, who were busy also in China, in India, and in Japan, among them. And her poets and singers, like Ibn Jami and Prince Ishaq and Ibrahm al Mausali, were honored figures. Here the great Barmecide family rose and fell, rivalling for a moment the Caliphs in opulence. Here a few women attained eminence—but it is for the most part as the playthings of men that we see them. Bagdad is, in a word, a fair sample of Islamic culture at its best, with all its weaknesses, its contrasted wealth and poverty, its slavery and concubinage. Its caliphs, scholars, and poets must be seen against a background for the most part of beggars and slaves, for like the Great Moguls in India they grew rich upon an impoverished people.

The Gypsies of Europe

DAYS IN THE SUN. By Martin Nexö. New York: Coward-McCann. 1929. $3.

DEEP SONG. By Irving Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. $3.50.

Reviewed by Walter Starkie

THIS summer in company with other pildesert of the Camargue to the fortified grims I wended my way across the salty church of Les Saintes Maries de la Mer to take part in the pilgrimage of the 25th of May. It was not for Saints Marie Jacoby or Marie Salomé that I came but for Sara, the Egyptian servant—patron saint of the Gypsies. In the two days of the pilgrimage I had many opportunities of studying the wandering folk who crowd the little village of Les Saintes Maries with their "roulottes" and camp around their fires. As a type they contrasted very definitely with the type of gypsy I had known in Hungary or Bohemia. Whereas the latter were sturdy, tall, thickset with round faces and flat noses, the latter impressed me by their slender grace, their sculpted features, their raven black hair, and their copper brown color. In a conversation I had with the celebrated poet and horseman, the Marquis of Broncelli, who has frequented these gypsies of Provence and Languedoc for many years, he put forward his favorite theory concerning the gypsies of Southern Europe. According to him gypsies are divided into two distinct races—distinct in features, bones, complexion, character, and traditions. The gypsies who deal in horses will never have anything to do with the gypsies who make bears dance or who work in copper: so far from trying to understand they hate one another. But the horse tamer gypsy will always recognize as his brother another "maguignon" from anywhere whom he meets at the Pilgrimage of "Les Saintes Maries."

The gypsies we met this year had come mostly from Languedoc and Toulouse, but there were some from Italy and Spain, and as I watched some of them walk gravely through the narrow streets with their heads high and that fierce look, I was reminded of those days in Granada when a visit to the gypsy caves in the mountains would be an excuse for a Bacchanalian entertainment with castanets and mad dancing to boot. It is curious to notice how the gypsies have had a romantic fascination for people even since Bonow wrote his "Zuicali or the Gypsies of Spain." It is as though people who live well-ordered lives in towns were ever trying to project their personalities out to the wandering vagabonds who know no law and whose only joys come from the sensation of the moment. Many books have painted the gypsy in romantic colors with no attempt to delve down to the reality.

* * *

This year a book has appeared by Martin Nexö, the well-known Danish author, entitled "Days in the Sun," in which he devotes one chapter to the gypsies of Spain. Mr. Nexö, coming from Scandinavia where winter hangs like a pall and all is gray and misty over stormy seas, when he gets to the south revels in its color. Every street in Tangiers or Cádiz light up his mind which had brooded on the snows of the North. His descriptions of the Andalusian basking in his sunlit country are very beautiful because they do not exaggerate. When he comes to the gypsies, however, he adopts the point of view of the respectable citizen who will have none of those loafers and parasites on society. He looks on them as unclean and so spares no details to point out their scabs and sores. I feel as if he were manfully struggling to destroy the romantic sense that as a good Northerner he must feel in his breast when he visits the South. "The insignificant gypsy girls whose lives are limited to the most rudimentary forms of animal existence, were transformed under the idealizing bomb of poetry into cold, soulless, but entrancing beauties who served as tools for government intrigues and whose embraces lured the secrets of diplomats from their breasts and made princes forget their duties." When he visits the caves and sees the gypsy dancing he does not describe it in the enthusiastic terms of Havelock Ellis, but calls it a crude expression of a crude conception of the erotic. According to him the dancer raises her legs a little and moves her hands indolently over her head, while all her temperament seems domiciled in her hips and pelvis.

I am afraid Mr. Nexö was unlucky; the gypsies must have been content to foist off upon him the international "cancan" which may be seen in the Café Chantant of any continental capital. It is extremely difficult to see the real gypsy dancing in South Spain and one has to wander far and wide in search of it. It is not to be found in the big cafés in Seville where the international clientèle prefer to be stirred by the elumbrations of the pelvis. When we do happen to see the real gypsy dancing in some tiny café in Cádiz or Ronda their is no doubt that there is the essence of the Spanish dance which has all the seriousness of a national rite. The gypsy has not invented his own dances, but has presented the old Andalusian measures which the Spaniard in modern days has forgotten.

For those who are interested in the life and folk-lore of the gypsies of South Spain, I should recommend the reading of "Deep Song" by Irving Brown. Mr. Brown is a foremost authority on gypsies whom we remember from his former books, "Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail," and "Gypsy Fires in America." He has lived with gypsies, collected their songs and poems, and studied their habits, and thus his latest book should make a great appeal to all those interested in the subject. Like Mr. Nexö he is attracted by the color and rhythm of Andalusia, but being less of a word painter he goes off in search of the folk-lore and traditions of the people. The title of his book "Deep Song" is a translation of the word "Cante Jondo" which means the song of the gypsy. As Mr. Brown shows, the difference musically between the songs and dances of the Andalusians and those of the gypsies is that the latter are much freer, just as in Hindu music there is a luxuriance of cross rhythms, a freedom, richness, fluidity, and multiplicity of rhythms that we should envy. Mr. Brown in his book gives a few musical examples of Sevillanas, Saetas, malagueñas, and a soleá which are interesting as genuine examples of gypsy music. His translations of the gypsy poems are graceful and preserve the flavor of the original.

The South of Spain is the country of improvisation and as Lopez de Vega once said: "at every corner there are a hundred poets." During Holy Week at Seville as the "pasos" or groups of sacred statues pass down the streets between the close, serried rows of people, suddenly we hear a girl's voice sing out in passionate song. In the inspiration of the moment she improvises a poem and music expressing her emotion as she sees the statue. Such improvised songs are called "saetas" or anows. The love poems are among the most interesting of the manifestations of the genius of the gypsy and Mr. Brown devotes one chapter to "Romany love."

* * *

In connection with the history of "Cante Jondo" it is important to notice what work has been done lately by Manuel de Falla, Spain's greatest composer. According to Falla, "Cante Jondo" is a study that will repay the closest investigation for he believes that in it we can discover traces of the Byzantine liturgical music. The theme of "Cante Jondo" has fascinated Falla, for we find traces of it through many of his works, such as "El Amor Brujo" and "El Sombrero de tres Picos" (The Three-Cornered Hat). I well remember a certain evening in 1921 in Falla's house in the shadow of the Alhambra where he had invited up from the sacro monte a quartet of gypsy players and singers. They played one after another those strange melodies and dances that seem to echo down countless centuries from days when the gypsy parias were roaming through Hindustan. Outside the moonlight lit up the ghostly cypress trees along the path leading to the Generalife whilst amid the myrtles of the Sultana's garden we heard the riffling of a thousand waterfalls. In that instant those gypsies became "minions of the moon," creatures of Diana, the goddess of the vagabonds with her daughter Acadia.

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Roman Life

THE SEVEN VICES. By GUGLIELMO FERRERO. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929. 2 vols. $5.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

IT is permissible to guess that, like a good deal of the novel itself, the title of Guglielmo Ferrero's study of Roman life at the close of the last century is charged with a deeper meaning than is at first apparent. Nominally "the Seven Vices" is the soubriquet of a group of dissipated young men of fashion, decadents after the elaborate manner of the 1890's, the "Seven Kings of Rome" of whom the hero makes one. But only one or two of these young men enter significantly into the story, which is chiefly concerned with the connection of their reputed leader, Oliviero Alamanni, officer in a crack regiment of cavalry, and son of a wealthy *arriviste* senator, with the case of Susanna Cavalieri whose trial for the murder of her husband whom she is accused of having poisoned, has become the talk of Rome. Oliviero is convinced of Susanna's innocence, and a sense of chivalry draws him, in defiance of his conservative father's opposition and mistrust, to take an active part in her defense. It is the first notable unselfish impulse of his life. His puny and misdirected efforts to turn the force of public opinion and prevent an obvious miscarriage of justice, reveal, as the reader follows their hidden consequences, the tangled web of intrigue and secret influence in which the Eternal City is enmeshed. The story itself, somewhat overloaded with episodic plot, does provide moments of genuine suspense, but it is in the inner moral workings of modern society, rather than in the narrative which serves to disclose them, that the author's interest obviously lies. The seven vices which seem the real protagonists, against whom Aliviero's real duel is fought, are those which were already old when the imagination of the Middle Ages gave them concrete form.

The novelist in Professor Ferrero's latest book conceals but imperfectly the historian. One is tempted to believe that after having pointed the moral and adorned the tale of the grandeur and decline of ancient Rome, the veteran scholar, despairing of the enormous task of treating on the same scale the complexities of his own century, has turned to fiction for a microcosm in which to portray and to judge his contemporaries. Fiction and historiography are sometimes sister arts, and the verve and color of expression which have served Professor Ferrero so well in the one, have not deserted him in the other. The breadth of vision with which he surveys all Europe, or spreads out the panorama of Rome, its struggling cliques and castes, its decaying palaces and politics, its magnificence and pettiness, its boasts and fears and secret weaknesses, is equalled by the alertness with which he seizes, the energy, not without malice, with which he exhibits the characteristic types of the swarming anthill of intrigue.

The Machiavellian subtleties of "the Cavaliere," one of those powers behind the mask of Demos, the loathsome full length portrait of Malaguzzi, a lawyer compounded of vanity and avarice who by blackmail and wire-pulling has risen to the top of his profession, the pompous Senator Guicciarelli, head of the Institute of Toxicology, who practices organic chemistry as if it were a branch of the black art, a charlatan and climber who inveighs against clerical obscurantism while he perverts the findings of science, the cynical yellow journalist who under the guise of fearless truth-telling nonchalantly blackens the characters of the defenseless while secretly he takes his orders from men of wealth, the spiteful and frustrated Signora Cavalieri, the lying greedy cook, Gaetano: all are equally vivid, and all serve equally to illustrate the author's conception of his time. Behind the figure of Crispi, the weary old conspirator to whom Italy has turned to uphold the forces of order, one feels not only a wealth of particular study and insight, but a general European significance. The most memorable figure in the book, Senator Alamanni, lifted above mediocrity only by his great wealth and his capacity for maintaining and increasing it, and ready for any ignoble compromise that will maintain the security of himself and his order, conservative without a background of tradition, and snobbish without respect for the society to which he aspires or any sense of its function, becomes, under Professor Ferrero's hand, an epitome and an indictment of modern capitalism: the scene at his house in which the savage Russian Archduke, Crispi, and the disillusioned cardinal exchange banalities under the respectful eyes of Alamanni's guests—the Army, the Church, and the State, decadent yet powerful under the patronage of Wealth,—rises almost to be an allegory of Europe drifting towards the catastrophe of 1914.

For, if Signor Ferrero's pictures are as brilliant as those which illustrate his study of the Roman Empire, his judgment on his own age is no less severe than that once passed upon the age of the Cæsars. Justice, he finds, is bought and sold, truth is powerless, honor a useless burden. The power of money has corrupted society; democracy, directed by backstairs politicians and yellow journalists, is a delusion; and the age ends in futility and despair. So, too, ends the story. Oliviero, his good impulses thwarted by his father's conservatism, as his evil have been given full play by his father's wealth, departs at last for Abyssinia to take part in the slaughter of Adowa, the shadow of which, thrown before the event, lies on the later pages. For Professor Ferrero is no believer in the regeneration of society by easy formulas and aggressive jingoism. His implied condemnation of tin-pot imperialism and executive tyranny can hardly be meant only for the Italy of the 1890's. There is no promise that the forces of light are likely to triumph in the near future. The indignant socialist Accolti, who is the one thoroughly admirable character in the story, seems as estranged from the world, a figure as helpless and as merely prophetic, as an early Christian in the reign of Nero. The disaster which impends looms larger than the failure of a petty colonial war, larger, perhaps, than the agony of 1914. However one may disagree with Professor Ferrero's views, his capacity to awaken the sense of history, and to make vivid his own conception of its meaning, is as undeniable now as ever.

Through the Ages

BARBARIAN STORIES. By NAOMI MITCHISON. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THERE were a good many barbarians in Mrs. Mitchison's admirable stories about the Greeks and Romans, and readers of those tales will remember her sympathy for the under dogs of ancient civilizations—slaves and women. This present collection might be cited as proving that civilization is at least no worse than barbarism. The time of the stories runs from the early Bronze Age to A. D. 1935; some of them are hardly more than incidents, one or two attain the dimensions of novelettes. Individually most of them are good and none is particularly noteworthy. They display Mrs. Mitchison's by now familiar characteristics—her really immense if sometimes spotty erudition, her comprehension (in so far as a modern is competent to judge) of the content of primitive religion; her sense of natural beauty and her intensity of feeling—above all her capacity for suffering, vicarious though it be. They reinforce the impression made by her other works, of an unusually sensitive and intelligent personality, apparently more important than her writings, and probably capable of better work than she has ever yet done.

To a reviewer who is no expert in such matters, Mrs. Mitchison seems to realize her barbarians of all ages pretty well, though her Vikings have been bettered by Howden Smith and others; of the civilized characters she does Byzantine Greeks as admirably as she has done classic Greeks; but her Romans are still Englishmen—something which the actual Romans, despite superficial resemblances, were not. But what, after all, is the Englishman, and what is he coming to be? The last of these stories is set at Cardiff only six years in the future, and depicts the solemn and legal ritual sacrifice—supposed to occur once a year somewhere in the British Isles—of a millionaire, to appease the envy of a starving proletariat. Much of it is hopelessly obscure to an American reader and might be even to Englishmen, but the point is obvious—that we are a good deal less remote from our Neolithic ancestors than we like to believe.

Barbarians may be expected to behave barbarously, so it is natural that there is a good deal of rape as well as of killing in this volume. It may, however, surprise Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, that well-known leader of the moral set in Hollywood, to find the most rapeful story of all dedicated to him —"by one of the many millions," the author chastely explains, "whom he has never even kissed." But even barbarians had to work for a living, or fight for it; effete moderns may be permitted a faint astonishment that they could find the leisure for such copious ravishments.

Leviathan

THE DARK JOURNEY. By JULIAN GREEN. Translated from the French by VYVYAN HOLLAND. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARSHALL A. BEST

"LEVIATHAN" was the name that Julian Green gave to his novel when it appeared in its original French last March. The reviewers made much of that title, and the publishers conducted a contest to determine what the author meant by it. But it was not that alone which made the book a best seller in Paris and brought its young American author increasing prestige in literary circles there. It would be hard to deny that it is by far the best of his books, the most complete as a story, the richest and most varied in its characters.

Like Julian Green's other books, "The Dark Journey" (as it is called in America) is a story of overmastering passions, a study of obsession. Guéret, tutor in a French provincial family, turns from his unexciting married life to follow a young girl of the village, whom he worships with a romantic longing. When he finds that her time is at the disposal of all the patrons of Mme. Londe's restaurant, for a fee, he is consumed with jealousy and self-reproach for his unsuccess with her. He makes a midnight attack, half nightmare and half waking, upon the house in which Angèle lives; but after he has forced his way in by superhuman efforts, he finds her room empty. The next day he attacks her when she is walking by the river and horribly multilates her face, leaving her for dead. In his haunted flight through the dusk along the alleys of the village, an old man happens to stand and stare at him, and Guéret impulsively kills him. This murder is the beginning of an elaborate plot, in which the varied emotions of the characters drawn into the orl Guéret's life are made no less dramatic tha action itself.

The skill of this narrative is only surpassed by the author's much more characteristic excellence, his subtle and thorough interpreting of human motives. Guéret, to be sure, is not a difficult being to understand; he is simply an unsatisfied ineffectual, botching the only great effort he ever makes for his happiness. The three women are more complex and more deeply studied. Mme. Londe presides over her restaurant with autocratic gusto, and stirs the pot of gossip until it tickles the palate of her pride. Angèle, recovering from the attack, puzzles over her unaccountable suitor and grieves for her lost beauty and the life which now can never be hers again. And the wife of Guéret's employer, Mme. Grosgeorge, with her futile existence and memories of a wasted youth, takes out her spleen on her son and tries to console herself with misapplied sympathy for the young tutor.

Though going so deep into the ways of morbidity, "The Dark Journey" is not a morbid book. It is always objective, and there is a clean-cut fatalism running through it which gives it meaninig. The sense of a compelling purpose, stronger than its victims and as blind as they are, grows out of the characters themselves; it is incarnated in their obsessions. Perhaps this is "leviathan," the fabulous monster, the biblical creature of the deep who shall not be drawn out with a hook. He lives within each of these characters and drives them on to their irrational acts:—in Guéret the passion for Angèle; in Mm. Grosgeorge the thwarted life which turns into a twisted kind of love, in Mme. Londe the consuming pride which makes her pander to her clientèle and brings ruin to her poor life when she no longer controls her one source of power, her knowledge of all the secrets of the community.

There are faults of detail in the novel. One may complain that Mme. Londe's humble person is too much dignified with such serious study, or take exception to the sudden *volte-face* of Mme. Grosgeorge at the end of the book. But more important, to those who are interested in Julian Green's progress as a novelist, is the fact that he has successfully worked his psychology into a story that is almost melodramatic in its action. More than in "Avarice House," much more than in "The Closed Garden,"

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he has related these morbid lives to a life outside, given them continuity and a background in the real world. And he has done so without sacrificing the great concentration which is his special strength. The town and its other inhabitants are alive; they share in the action and enrich the central characters. Through this broadening of his interests, he may yet fulfil the literary hopes that both France and America hold out for him.

Grim Power

ULTIMA THULE. By Henry Handel Richardson. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by Robert B. Macdougall

THIS book possesses many of the qualities that we demand of the truly remarkable novel, the novel that will endure and be an accepted standard by which we can in the future judge a new generation of fiction. Tragic power is its chief quality; "Jude the Obscure" had much the same effect upon the reader. Such a moving novel it is difficult to imagine; one must read to believe. Probably four out of five readers will cry, "Unpleasant! Depressing!! Morbid!!! Unendurable!!!!" And these timid souls will give up without finishing. Worse fools they! The book begins to take shape in our consciousness after the half-way point has been reached; then the dreary wastes of melancholy come to seem purposeful, and the very real emotional distress that we have gone through resolves itself into an esthetic satisfaction. When we finally finish the novel we realize that we have had a most precious experience. "Ultima Thule" has a power, a force, a directed energy that make the average good novel look like a relaxed oyster. This is the fundamental reason why we can say assuredly that "Ultima Thule" will seem a great novel to all whose emotions can stand the strain. The only excellence about which there can be debate is this quality of distressful, haunting melancholy. In every other way the novel is undeniably of the first rank—in method, material, and manner. Therefore, the difference of opinion on the novel as a whole will turn into a debate between the tender-minded ones and the rugged-minded ones upon the propriety of overpowering tragedy in fiction.

Henry Handel Richardson is the pen name of a woman about whom little information is available. In 1908 her "Maurice Guest" was published in England, where it had merely a *succès d'estime*. Other novels followed with no greater popular approval, and a little over ten years ago appeared the first volume of a triology which was to be the life history of one Richard Mahony. This first volume was "The Fortunes of Richard Mahony"; the second, "The Way Home"; and the third is "Ultima Thule," which brings Mahony to his death. It is remarkable that a final volume carrying on a story begun in two earlier novels can be so complete in itself. We notice the lack of background in only two places: in the beginning of the narrative Mahony's situation is not well accounted for, nor is his family's; and secondly, throughout the novel there are a number of minor characters who, although never of real importance, are always a little vague in our minds. But otherwise and in all important aspects, the novel is quite self-sufficient. It will be surprising if Henry Handel Richardson does not rise from obscurity with the publication of her latest novel. Few who find themselves under the spell of "Ultima Thule" will be satisfied until they have read the author's earlier works.

* * *

Richard Mahony is an Australian physician. We see him at the beginning of "Ultima Thule" rising from financial and social calamity, setting up a practice near Melbourne, and waiting for his wife and three children to arrive from England. The family's situation in this suburban town soon becomes, for one reason and another, thoroughly unbearable, and after weeks of agonizing indecision Mahony moves the family to Barambogie, a small town many miles in the bush. In this village, too, tragedies fill the days; everything and everyone is miserable. After one more move Mahony's inevitable mental and physical collapse occurs, and thereafter tragedy is deep and continuous. The character of Mahoney is exposed with a surgeon's cold skill, the author never leaving us in any doubt of his approaching paralysis and insanity. In fact, the novel might justly be called a study in the growth of insanity accompanied by physical degeneration. We stand by, helpless; waiting as if for some certain, destructive act of God. There is no relief; the Australian scene, desolate and hostile, is as oppressively vivid as if seen under a threatening sky by the quick brutality of lightning. The wife grows desperate in her faithfulness to her mad husband. The children are terrified by their father's unaccountable weakness and hysteria. And as a kind of drone in the background is the poverty of the family, the sense we have of their complete isolation from all that makes ordinary living decent and rewarding. Beyond doubt, Mahony is one of the memorable figures in English fiction. Every turn in the novel is a step ahead in the building of his character; every aspect of his completed character is significant, fresh, right.

Prince of Charlatans

CAGLIOSTRO. By Johannes von Guenther. Translated by Huntley Paterson. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. $3.50.

Reviewed by Ernest Sutherland Bates

"I BELIEVE that Nature produces a creature like Cagliostro only once in a century," wrote Lavater. Hardly even that often, one might safely add. The more we know about him, the more perplexing Cagliostro becomes—the very prince of charlatans, certainly, in whom roguery was raised to a fine art, but also, probably, something more than a charlatan. As to how much more, there is still little agreement. Few historians today would accept Carlyle's facile accusation of complete quackery. But how much of Cagliostro's idealism was real, how much assumed, there is hardly any possible way of determining.

Such an essentially legendary character, with a career rich in events nearly all capable of various interpretations, offers the finest kind of material for historical fiction—material first used notably by Dumas in "The Memoirs of a Physician," and now again even more notably, by Johannes von Guenther in his "Cagliostro." In each instance the character is greatly simplified by the novelist. Dumas, himself much of a charlatan, illustrated the old saying of a rogue caught by a rogue; he accepted Cagliostro at the latter's own appraisal and represented him as a kingly but mysterious philanthropist. Johannes von Guenther, on the other hand, follows the Carlylean interpretation, but, one might say, reinterprets the interpretation, lifting it from the moral to the esthetic plane.

"In these pages," he writes, "Cagliostro was intended to romp through the world just as merrily, just as brutally, and just as craftily and slyly as he did a hundred years ago." Romp through the world Von Guenther's hero certainly does—through the many-hued panorama of eighteenth century Italy, England, France, and Russia, pictured by the author with glorious gusto and imaginative sweep. It matters little whether Cagliostro is really the same with Giuseppe Balsamo, as Von Guenther, following tradition, makes him, or that he is here given an amorous intrigue with Louise de la Motte Valois which in fact may never have occurred. The work is fiction, not history, unadorned with foolish bibliography or pretense to accuracy—and it is significant fiction. Occasionally, to be sure, the passion is a bit perfervid; very occasionally, the narrative halts momentarily, as it were, in order to admire itself, but on the whole, the book possesses the intensity of very brilliant art.

Return to Birds

WHEN cities prod me with demands
Of many minds and many hands,
When life becomes a cry of bargains
In unassimilated jargons
And men bewilder men with words,
Suddenly I remember birds:
Goldfinches, those untamed canaries,
Preferring thistle-seed to cherries,
Shaking their broken crystal notes
Carelessly out of china throats.
Redrobins, Spring's first feathered offering,
Whose burly strut is free of suffering
Except in drouth when they complain,
Calling irascibly for rain.
Every bird on every hill
Whose small tongues twist and turn and thrill:
The catbird, Nature's parodist,
In whose bright mill all sounds are grist—
Cluck, coloratura, mew and squawk.
The redstart's prattle, like the talk
Flung by young brooks to tolerant stones,
Contentment strengthening their bones.
The meadow-lark's slow-troubling tones.
The oven-bird, scholastic creature,
Crying for "Teacher! Teacher! Teacher!"
The oriole, wind-and-firebird,
Too seldom seen, more rarely heard.
The cuckoo's constant minor third.
Blackbird with epaulets of red.
Warbler parading on his head.
The cardinal, that crimson arrow.
The chestnut-crowned staccato sparrow
Whose voice is slivered in high chips.
The thrasher's frenzied sweeps and dips.
Dun city sparrows, numerous
As Jews and more ubiquitous,
Common to every slum and park.
Swallows, those arcs within an arc.
The hummingbird's arrested spark,
Half-flame, half-flower, blossoming where
Emerald and ruby burn in air.
The nighthawk's ghostly drum, the shrill
Insistence of the whip-poor-will.
The chebec, that small plague among
The flies with Egypt on its tongue.
Swifts and their irrepressible young
To whom all chimney homes are free.
Phoebes whose domesticity
Has no concern with privacy.
The purple martin's undramatic
Ecstasy of the acrobatic.
The blue-jay, bully of the boughs,
Usurping any half-built house,
Comedian-brawler among leaves,
Roisterer, rascal, king of thieves.
The sentimental pewee's call,
Persuasive in its dying fall,
More languid than a pampered woman's.
The partridge ruffling out her summons.
Crow in his sheath of violet-jet,
A ravening scold in silhouette.
Conceited high-hole's much-ado.
Woodpecker's amorous tattoo.
The kingbird with imperial crest,
Quirring defiance from his nest.
Fat bobolink, impetuous singer,
Who, living, is a lavish flinger
Of notes too prodigal for man,
And, dead, the gourmet's ortolan.
The yellowthroat's beseeching phrase,
Void of self-pity or self-praise.
That country questioner, the chat;
Wrens who have all the answers pat.
The tanager's abrupt rebellion,
Taunting the greenery with vermillion.
Song-sparrow's mastery of change,
An opera in himself, whose range
The ear of flesh can never know.
The tropic-patterned vireo.
Metallic lustre, grating cackle,
That marks the iridescent grackle.
Those flakes of sky let loose, rose-breasted
Bodies lightly blueberry-dusted,
New England's liveliest muezzins,
The rusty robin's colored cousins.
Always a challenge, the unweary
Crescendo of the confident veery,
That thrush of overtones. And lush
As a long waterfall, the thrush
Himself, brown hermit of the trail,
Our lark, our more than neightingale,
Surpassing interval and scale. . . .
These are the happy ones; their breath
Is song, their element is faith.
Untouched by all the transient oddities
They do not traffic in commodities;
They neither kill for sport nor wear
A wreath of insects in their hair;
Their flight does not pollute the air;
Their mornings have no yesterdays
Who, in themselves, have infinite ways
Of turning petulance to praise;
Who never trick themselves with words. . . .
Gratefully I return to birds.

Louis Untermeyer.

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The Bowling Green

In the Mail

NOTHING is as interesting as letters; we interrupt our current serial to deal with some items that have been accumulating in the mail.

The two pleasantest picture postal cards of recent arrival are (1) from Stanley Morison, the high-spirited calligrapher, showing a photo of that magnificent locomotive the *Flying Scotsman* of the London and Northeastern Railway. Stanley writes: "The ambition of a lifetime realized! 393 miles non-stop from King's Cross on the footplate of a locomotive of this type—and arrived 10 minutes ahead of time. And I had not been in the cabin any old shunter since I was 15." (2) a picture of the ruins of Schloss Beilstein am Mosel from the vacationing Arnold Whitridge, who remarks "Canoing down the Moselle is an activity to be seriously considered by the 3 Hours for Lunch Club. I find all Germans are members unconsciously. You would like this region: it is nearly as German as Hoboken." What we specially like are the terraced vineyards on the castle crag.

* * *

William Allen White reports on the agitation in Kansas when two pictures of members of the Book of the Month Club committee got interchanged in an advertisement. The Leavenworth *Times* rose to Bill's defense as follows:—

The New York *Times* Book Review transposes the pictures of William Allen White and Christopher Morley, and we are peeved in consequence. Our friend Bill of Empory ain't no prize beauty, but Morley has a mug to make a pig squeal, and we are decidedly opposed to the swap.

"See," writes Bill, "how the Kansas press is standing by me in this hour of crisis."

Those photos are an old and painful subject: we believe that they do both Bill and ourself horrid injustice.

* * *

Anne Ellis, Albuquerque, N. M., writes:—

Every time I read the ad. of your venture in old-time plays I am reminded of a song. In the mining camp where I lived as a child there was a miner whom we called "Alkali Ike." Every payday he went on a spree, having different stages of drunkenness, first happy drunk, then fighting drunk, followed by crying drunk, then snakes. Between the crying and snakes stage, I, a small white-haired, barefooted child, carried to the saloon sour or clabber milk for Alkali to sober off on. (It's very good if the occasion ever arrives.)

At these times Alkali would sing to me the following:

What means this long line of people
Going down Broadway?
What means this long line of hearses
All drawn up in funeral array?

The play it was the "Two Or-phuns,"
Bad luck seemed to lie in their wake,
It seems they were brought to our city
The lives of our dear ones to take.

The play went on very smoothly,
Till sparks from the curtain did fly,
. . . . . .
Alas left alone there to die.

O God! don't you hear that cry fi-err,
How dis-mul those bells they do sound,
The Brooklyn The-aye-terr is burning,
Is alas burning close to the ground.

Next morning among the black ru-ins
Oh God! what a sight met our eyes,
The dead were lying in all shapes
And some we could not recognize.

Then both Alkali and I wept bitterly. This is all I can remember, strange, too, when it's only been a matter of forty-five years.

* * *

The following unusual inquiry comes from the rector of the Church of the Atonement, Westfield, Mass.:—

For a number of years it has been my privileged experience to ship off occasionally on a sea-going ship as a seaman, finding, as many have found before, the breath of life in such excursions. I am qualified as an Able Seaman, and try to prevent my extended shore-leaves from reducing my general proficiency as a sailor.

In preparing an address which should touch on the philosophy of such a double life, I find myself unable to recall any considerable number of names of those who have done and are doing likewise, but it occurs to me that you might be able to tell me. I rule out, of course, the landlubber who sometimes ventures to sea like certain college students, and should like to know those who, while pursuing literary work, etc., on shore, are also equally at home on deck or in the fire-room.

WOLCOTT COIT TREAT.

* * *

Speaking of seafaring matters: it is not often that one reprints a straight sales appeal, but here is a letter from the Houghton Mifflin Company which deserves circulation on its own merits.

Dear Sir:

The *Mary Celeste!*

Speak that name to any initiate of sea-lore and watch the expression on his face. In those two words you have evoked what is—or has been—the supreme sea-mystery of all time.

The *Mary Celeste* was sighted on December 4th, 1872, by the brig *Dei Gratia* off the Azores, all sails set, apparently going normally along her course. There was an unanswered hail, a boarding—and then complete bewilderment, for a prolonged search failed to reveal one living soul on board her. Everything was in order—the table, even, set for breakfast—and, strangest of all, the lifeboats intact—but master and crew had vanished into thin air. The last entry in her log had been made eleven days before and the ship was still sailing on her course. What had happened to her crew? How did they disappear from the ship without taking to the lifeboats? How had the ship kept her course for eleven days with no human hand to guide her? The passing years have brought many so-called true stories of the *Mary Celeste* and a myriad of ingenious guesses. The enigma has been explained in every way from suicidal mania to navigation by spooks. The story of the *Mary Celeste* became the greatest of sea legends, the most inscrutable of the sinister riddles of the ocean.

The mystery has finally been solved. It is no tale of spooks or fantastic poisoning, but it unfolds a reality, grimmer and more stirring than any of the fictions that have grown up around the ill-fated brig. In *The Great Mary Celeste Hoax* Mr. Laurence Keating has unravelled the whole story step by step. Taking the testimony of the ship's cook, who was found at the age of ninety-two living at Liverpool, he has authenticated it by a thorough study of independent records. The mystery of the *Mary Celeste* is a mystery no longer. It is a brutal, grim tragedy in which the "crimping" that made the Port of New York a horror in the seventies, the desire for revenge of a water-front boarding-house keeper, the lust of a shanghaied hand, a Baby Grand piano, the insane irritability of a giant mate, and the sordid covetousness of a fellow captain play their parts.

The Great Mary Celeste Hoax is bound in octavo and illustrated with charts and plans. Any bookseller will show you a copy.

* * *

A New Jersey correspondent reports:—

I read recently your article on the ——— bookshop. It seems to me that I know of one which is fully as interesting. The stock is not so large as at ———'s, but the shop itself is more attractive. The address is 58 East 58. One must go down three steps and then through a short corridor to get in. Even such a slight inconvenience enhances the place: it gives one the self-satisfied feeling that he is about to enjoy a silent place known only to those who have been very good. Or perhaps the mysterious feeling one has on entering a speakeasy.

* * *

A parson in a Southwestern State writes:—

I write to express thanks so deep that they amount almost to indignation. I have just been reading ———, and you have made me so confoundedly homesick that, were the funds available, I would be off to those dear sights and sounds again. While you were trying to keep warm in Bayswater at Christmas 1910, I was trying my wings at Herne Hill, my church standing almost opposite Ruskin's old house, 28 Denmark Hill, and just a couple of minutes walk from the sun-dial in Ruskin Park which marks the spot where Mendelssohn wrote his Spring Song.

I don't know how to thank or scold you enough for arousing so many blessed memories, that cause me such a painful longing. To be on Fleet Street again! Did you ever go into Carter's (right opposite the Law Courts) for a hair cut and a shave? That was the place to see the great lawyers. The shop was run by the three daughters of the founder; they were members of my church. And Fleet Street: I used to go up at night and meet P———, city editor of the *Daily News*, who was in that trouble which also involved Philip Gibbs when they left their jobs to write for the shortlived but superb *Tribune*. We used to go over to the Press Club and eat sandwiches and drink a bottle of beer round about 1 A.M. Then there was King, who wrote "Measures and Men," a daily column on doings and persons in the House of Commons. He was a shrewd, popular scribbler. He told me in 1911 that Germany would take the world by the throat within five years.

When I read the anecdote about the cockney youngster enlisting in Canada I had to use my handkerchief; he was of a noble breed, one of whom wrote a great poem in Babylon, long ago: "Oh Jerusalem, if ever I forget thee. . . ."

This is very scrappy, but you are to blame. I ought to be writing Sunday morning's sermon. But I can't do it just now unless I change my plans and preach on Homesickness . . . for the next few days I shall be over there. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if I should walk down the street and think I'm making for the island in Piccadilly Circus to wait the arrival of the West Norwood bus that will drop me at Herne Hill.

I don't embarrass our friend by identifying him, but I send him affectionate homage. Yes, by heaven, that's the way a man ought to love his home town. I only add that in recent visits to London I have always, and appropriately, had hair-cuts in the Bush Building.

Lillian Zellhoefer, of Alhambra, California, submits a list of questions which may interest some speculators in literary criticism:—

As yet there has been little written in appreciation of Stuart P. Sherman and his contribution to modern thought and letters. Perhaps it is too soon. At any rate, in preparing a thesis essaying a critical study of Sherman, I find myself obliged to search out much of my material in the highways and byways of unpublished opinion.

If you can find time to answer even in part some of the following questions; or feel in a position to give any information concerning the critic's life, training, attitudes, or the formative influences that molded his career, I shall accept your courtesy most gratefully.

What evaluation do you put upon Sherman as a critic in relation to his time?

How far was he influenced by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More?

Was the ultra-conservatism of his early criticism entirely one of conviction?

Did opportunism enter into the situation?

How much of his bitter attack on Mencken and what he calls "our young people" was the result of righteous indignation? How much was grandstand?

To what extent do you think Sherman was influenced by the War in his prejudice against anything German?

How do you interpret his hostility toward the Jews?

What native element in Sherman accounts for his being caught by the New England tradition?

What is your personal opinion of his explanation and justification of Puritanism?

How much do you think that the changes in Sherman's thought and attitude evinced by his later works were due to his transfer to journalism? Do you think that in this right-about-face he found his soul or lost it?

How much sound and tutored knowledge did Sherman have of the arts other than literature?

How would you characterize the critic's style?

Do you consider that there exists in the modern universities of America what might be called a humanistic circle? If so, would Sherman be called one of its members?

* * *

I have noticed in a circular issued by the Braille Bible Society of Los Angeles that it is a hundred years this year since Louis Braille in Paris invented the beneficient raised alphabet which bears his name. Should not someone tell us more about Braille? Few men have done the world a kinder service.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Montaigne's Diary

THE DIARY OF MONTAIGNE'S JOURNEY TO ITALY IN 1580 AND 1581. Translated and edited by E. J. TRECHMANN. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929.

Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

THE manuscript of Montaigne's Diary was discovered in a chest in his house about a hundred and eighty years after his death, about 1782. Nearly half of it was written by one of his domestics, largely no doubt from his dictation, though the secretary volunteers remarks on his own account. The second half is in Montaigne's hand, and in Italian. Only the last few pages change to French, as he crosses the border on his way home to take up his duties as newly elected Governor of Bordeaux. The first edition of the Essays appeared in 1580 and the second in 1582, so that the dates of the Diary have that further interest in Montaigne bibliography.

Montaigne left Paris in September in a party of twelve. The state in which he traveled, and the consideration with which he seems to have been everywhere received, reminds us that he was a man of rank and importance. He and his party went through Chalons, Basle, Constance, Augsburg, Munich, Innsbruck, the Tyrol, and by the Trentino to Verona. His comments are memorable on the intermingling and relations of the Catholic and Reformed religions in Germany. He finds living conditions there in many respects better than in France. In Italy he is more interested in Rome and in the medicinal baths than in any thing else. One realizes more than from the Essays how seriously he suffered from the stone. The details of it in the Diary are more abundant and specific than is altogether agreeable. Of art and architecture he takes little notice, but about the ways of men his curiosity is immense. He was gone about a year and five months, and returned through Turin, Milan, Mont Cenis, and across the south of France.

The Diary is of course a document of various kinds of importance. It was translated into English twice before, by W. C. Hazlitt in 1842, and by W. G. Waters in 1923. Mr. Trechmann says that the first part of the Hazlitt translation is good, but it grows more and more like a paraphrase; and that the Waters translation is persistently inaccurate.

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Books of Special Interest

Melanesian Society

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF SAVAGES IN NORTHWESTERN MELANESIA: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea. By BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI. New York: Horace Liveright. 1929. 2 vols. $10.

Reviewed by ROBERT LOWIE
University of California

TO write a fairly technical ethnographic treatise of six hundred pages with barely a dull paragraph is a literary achievement of no mean order. Professor Malinowski has achieved this incredible *tour de force.* If he ever nods, he fails to induce drowsiness in his audience. Something, no doubt, must be set down to the credit of the subject-matter, but certainly not a great deal. For, as the author states in his Introduction, his frank exposition of Trobriand custom with all its superficial appearance of unbridled lechery will disappoint the pornography-monger.

What a general public will carry away from these volumes is, indeed, quite the opposite of such an impression. This unusually graphic picture of a native community in which children take the mother's clan name, where sexual intercourse begins at an early age, and where no woman is a virgin when she marries, will nevertheless bring home the important truth that the fundamental principles of family life persist even in so unpromising a social soil, and that definite taboos limit individual license and outlaw the transgressor. Indeed, the Victorian code, though radically different, was not less stringent than the Trobriand Islander's. While prospective spouses may cohabit freely if there is no bar due to kinship, they must never eat a common meal. "To take a girl out to dinner without having previously married her . . . would be to disgrace her in the eyes of a Trobriander." Even husband and wife are under strict rules of behavior when in public. Any caress or signs of tenderness would subject them to ridicule; mutual lousing is the only sanctioned demonstration of conjugal devotion.

Professor Malinowski represents the "functional" school of anthropology. That is to say, he is neither interested in ethnographic detail merely from an antiquarian's point of view, nor does he concern himself with a reconstruction of past history. He wants to know what social purpose is fulfilled by each cultural item, how the elements of culture are interrelated and affect one another. Here is a society with maternal descent and imposing duties upon the mother's brother which we associate with the father. How do the paternal and the avuncular sentiments harmonize or clash? Why, in spite of the important part a brother plays in supporting his married sister, does he fail to be consulted as to her matrimonial arrangements? Why do the Trogrianders permit a man to marry the daughter of his father's sister, but not the daughter of his mother's brother? And why does the favored form of cousin marriage imply a change of the customary rules of residence—the couple settling in the mother's rather than in the father's community ("matrilocal" versus "patrilocal" residence)? These are among the problems Dr. Malinowski faces and illuminates. Thus the reader learns much that is not even hinted at in the title,—about kinship terms and the clan system, about magic, myth, and ceremonial. For they are all closely interwoven with the sex impulses of the Trobrianders.

The method is fraught with the dangers of repetitiousness. In order to be sure that all things are seen in proper perspective, the votary of functionalism expounds them over and over again under different headings. Those familiar with Professor Malinowski's earlier books and articles will thus encounter many old acquaintances among the facts described in these volumes. Would not a single *opus magnum* on the tribe have been the wiser plan of publication? However this may be, the author's achievement remains noteworthy. In "The Sexual Life of Savages" no less than in his "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" he has given us a singularly vivid picture of a Melanesian society in full blast; I know of no ethnographic work that matches it for graphic description linked with theoretic insight. In one respect, to be sure, the anthropologist may feel unsatisfied. Dr. Malinowski shuns comparison with other societies. Yet social dynamics can never be established on the narrow basis of observation provided by a single tribe. Let us hope that before long the author will survey other matrilineal societies,—the Hopi of Arizona, for instance, who, unlike his Trobrianders, are matrilocal, and the Northwest Coast Indians of British Columbia, who resemble the Melanesians in both rules of residence and of descent. The layman, of course, need not worry over such matters and may joyously abandon himself to reliving Dr. Malinowski's experiences in the South Seas.

An Early American

ABIGAIL ADAMS, The Second First Lady. By DOROTHY BOBBE. New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1929. $3.50.

THE only previous volume on Abigail Adams, that published a dozen years ago by Laura E. Richards, having been decidedly sketchy, there was a real place of this book. Mrs. Bobbe's book shows research, and in spite of its rather breathless style is well done. The subtitle is, perhaps, not well chosen; for, after all, Abigail Adams's importance was not as the wife of President Adams—but as a letter-writer.

A woman of both strong character and strong mind, Mrs. Adams lived an eventful life and lived it strenuously. She bore four children; when the British and American forces battled about Boston, she and her family were exposed to many dangers; she managed her husband's affairs with ability during part of his absence in Europe, and was later with him in France and England; she took an important rôle in the society of the American capital till ill-health forced her to leave it; and she felt the keenest interest in politics. Her letters, which she refused to have published, but which her grandson brought out in two different volumes, are among the best ever written in this country, and should be far better known than they are. If Mrs. Bobbe's highly interesting volume leads many readers on to make their acquaintance, it will have filled in that alone a useful purpose.

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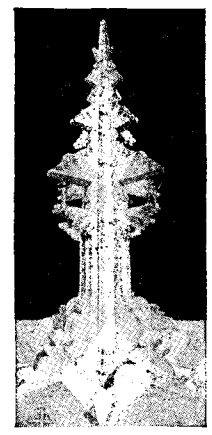

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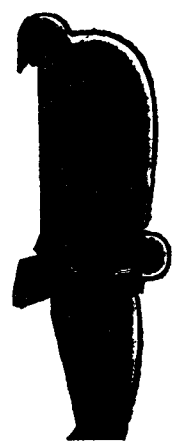

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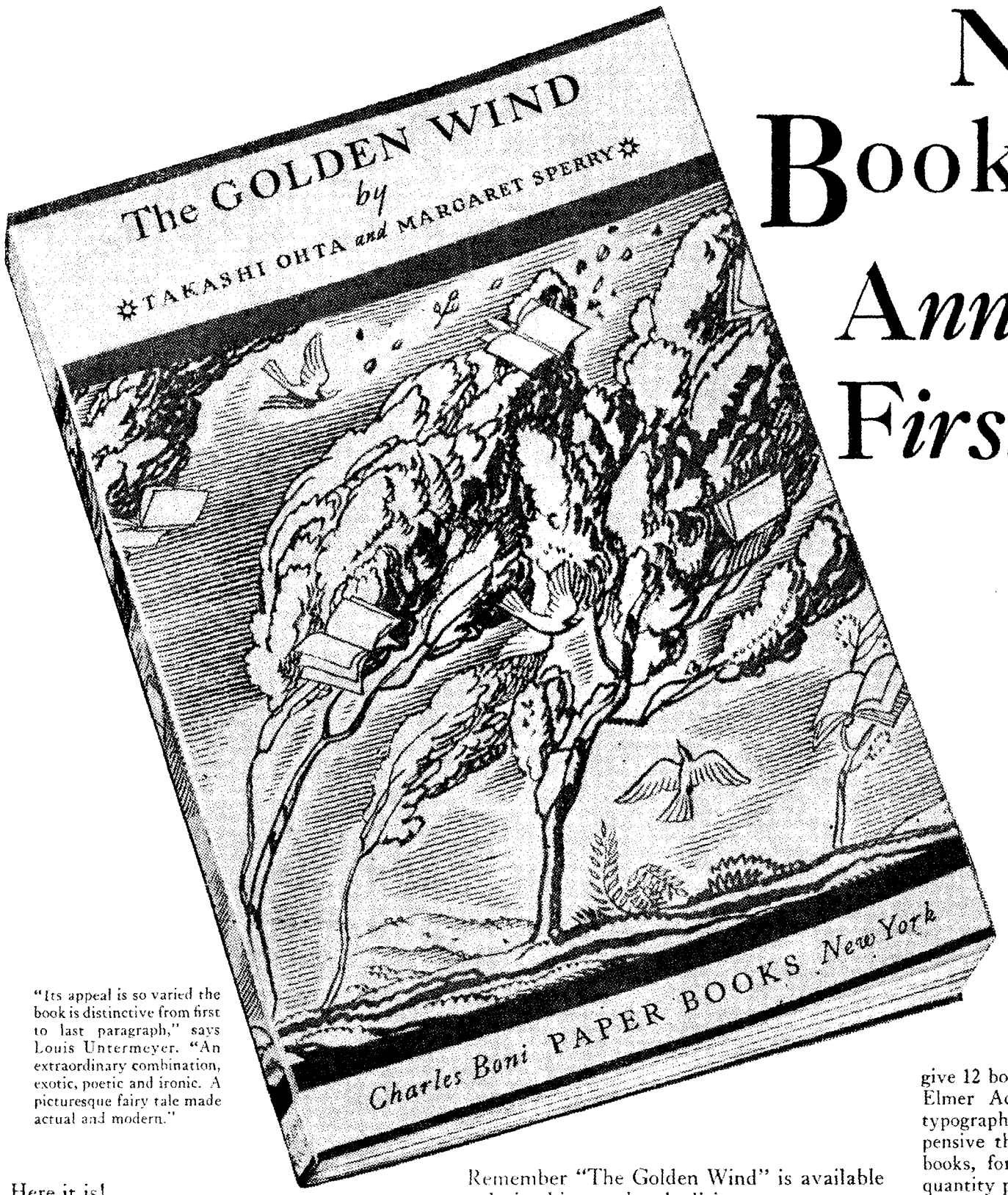

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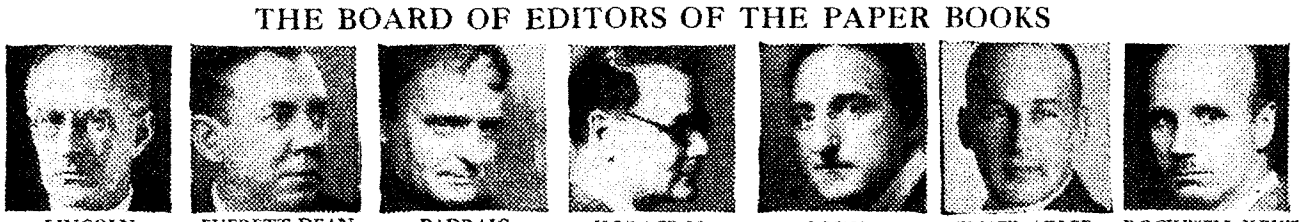

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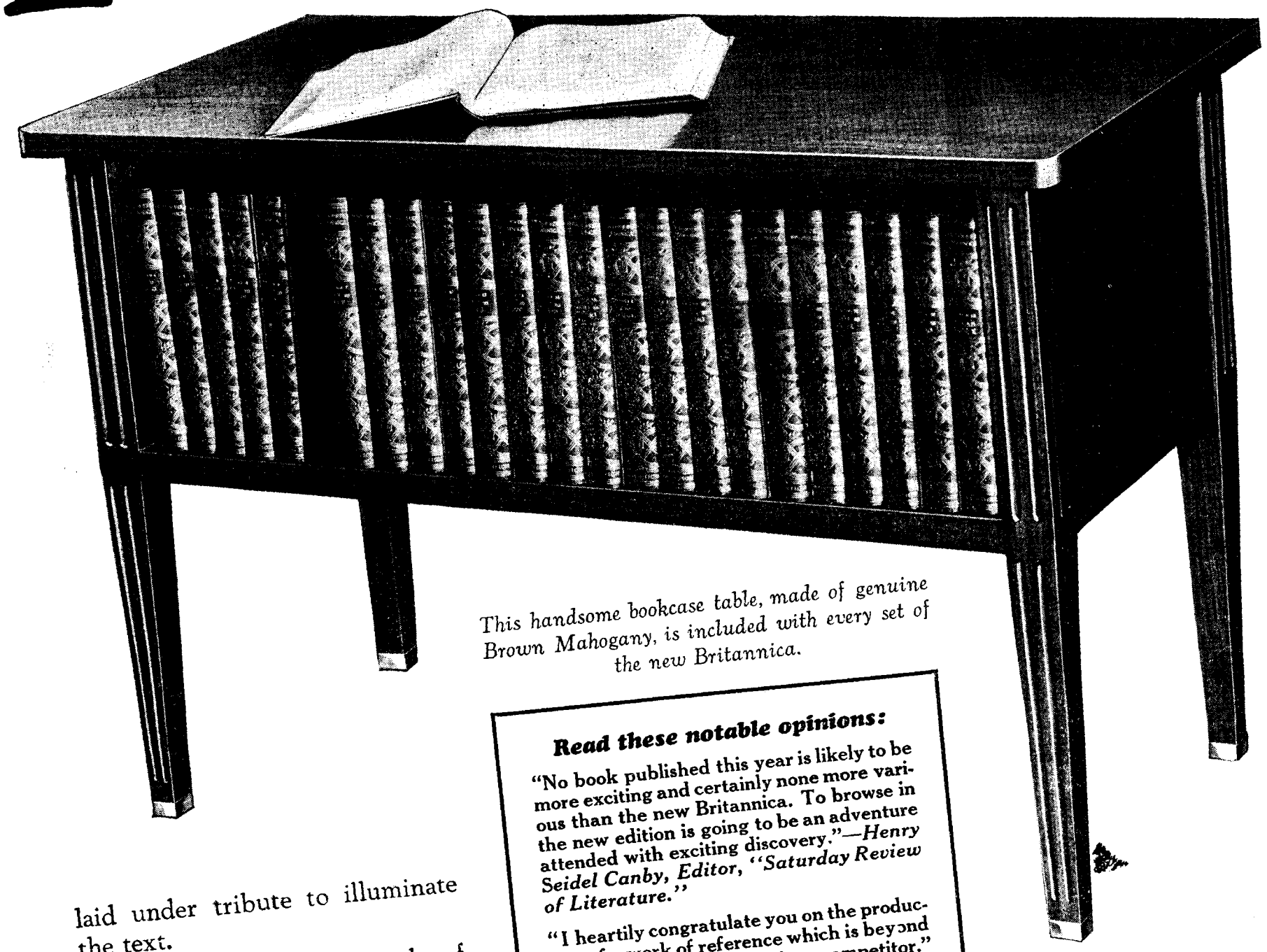

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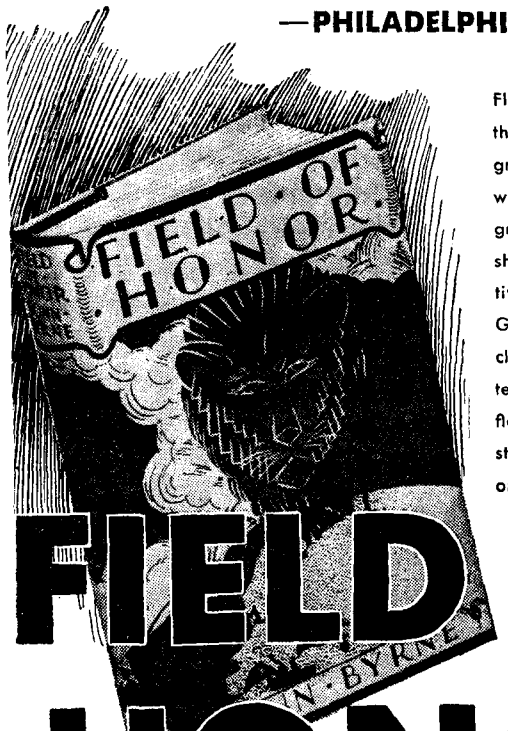

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A Letter From France

By ABEL CHEVALLEY

I HAVE been these last few weeks decanting my impressions on the development of the French novel since the war, and, as occasions arise, I hope to let you have, for what they are worth, the results of that slow sifting process. But I cannot embark passengers on my galley without giving them some means of controlling the vessel's direction and the pilot's capacity. This letter is in the nature of a chart-room catalogue. Others, some more competent, some less disinterested, have already mapped out the ground, charted the sea of contemporary literature (I am afraid my metaphors are getting mixed up)—anyway, they have explored the way along which we are to travel. It would be unfair to ignore their work. I must at least enumerate some available sources of control which you can tap if you want to check my facts and impressions.

Among the most important are: René Lalou: "Histoire de la Littérature Française" (Crès), Bernard Fay: "Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine" (Kra), and the works of André Billy and Daniel Mornet on French contemporary literature already mentioned in my letter to this *Review* published December 10, 1927.

These are all books of general information, the first two impregnated with the after-war spirit, and the second singularly complete, alive, and interesting, at least as you read it in French (the American translation is not quite reliable). André Billy's book is short, compact, exhaustive—Daniel Mornet's, brimming over with general ideas, considers contemporary literature from the point of view of the development of French philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Its author is a professor at the Sorbonne.

None of these works is exclusively devoted to the novel. But, in France as elsewhere, the novel has almost become the whole of literature. Everything is published under the title of novel. That word has ceased to have a limited, a definite meaning. It bears to general literature the same relation as the word "infantry" to the word "armies." Romance is more akin to cavalry, lyricism to air forces, and journalism to light or heavy artillery. Infantry remains the main force. Once upon a time it meant something to fight dismounted when at least equal masses fought on horseback. Then the word "infantry" was sufficient to convey a technical sense. But since Napoleon's time, when "infantry" became the "queen of the battlefield," how many dozens of different infantries have we had the misfortune of sending to death and glory? At present, nearly all infantry soldiers are specialists. We speak of "mitrailleurs," "signallers," "sappers," etc., but no longer of foot-soldiers, even "foot-guards." The novelist was once the foot-soldier of literature. Some day or other he will have to be a specialist or nothing. The Wellses of the future will all sign themselves bombardiers.

⁂ ⁂

In the meantime, we have to use the single word novel, or novelist, for twenty different sorts of writing and writers. Lucien Daudet has published a book on "Le Roman et les Nouveaux Ecrivains," and Jules Bertaut on "Le Roman Nouveau," where roman means sometimes social propaganda, sometimes history, sometimes poetry, sometimes nothing but a hotch-potch of all sorts of stuff and nonsense. I need not add that Lucien Daudet, whatever he chooses to discuss, is always original, intense, and intensely partial, highly suggestive.

Gillouin's "Esquisses Littéraires et Morales," Thibaudet's "Le Liseur de Romans," André Thérive's "Opinions Littéraires," Lièvre's "Esquisses Critiques," Massis's "Jugements," Vandérem's "Miroir des Lettres," Lasserre's "Cinquante Ans de Pensée Française," Ramon Fernandez's "Messages," Paul Archambault's "Jeunes Maîtres," Coulon's "Anatomie Littéraire," B. Crémieux's "Vingtième Siècle," Henriot's "Livres et Portraits," Dubech's "Les Chefs de File de la Jeune Génération," Jean Hytier's "Le Roman de l'Individu," Jean Larnac's "Littérature Féminine," Frédéric Iefèvre's "Une Heure avec . . ." (3 vols.), André Maurois's "Aspects de la Biographie," all these are conceived from different points of view and consider the contemporary novel under a variety of different aspects. Their value is very unequal, but all will prove useful if they are allowed to limit, contradict, and correct one another.

In the August numbers of *La Revue des Deux Mondes* you will find a somewhat confused and lenitive, but still very significant account of "L'Esprit de la Littérature Moderne," by André Berge. Here ends for the present my enumeration of sources and references.

The above review of reviews, however dry, summary, compendious, will appear all the more necessary if I tell you at once my first and perhaps most important conclusion on the course of the French novel since the war. What strikes me most is its anxiety concerning its own object and direction. It appears to me as dominated and characterized by an intense feeling of inquiry as regards its nature and methods. Our great novelists are not only novelists, they are also philosophers, and, in a lesser degree, historians of the novel. Some say that this is surely a symptom of decadence and morbidity. I am not so sure of that. The same was said of Richardson's awkward disquisitions on the emotional and moralizing object of fiction, of Fielding's prefaces and introductory or parenthetic observations, of Sterne's constant and interminable digressions into the nature of his work. Do we yet realize to its full extent the fearful shock of Rousseau's "Confessions" on the course of the European novel? Were these symptoms of death or tokens of life? And how many more modern instances could be added?

I find among athletes and healthy people a cocksureness about the causes of illness as intense and passionate as the credulity of invalids concerning the sources of health. And, surely, the investigation conducted by the critics and novelists of our age into the principles of their art is just as legitimate as the quest led by scientists into the principles of their science. Who but knows whether both pursuits, instead of being parallel, independent, contradictory, as so many fondly believe, will not prove identical and lead to the same goal?

⁂ ⁂

Human personality is so intensely complex, so blinding, that it can best be explored as we explore the sky through a telescope by means of that adaptable mirror which the true novelist offers to the true reader. Is not "vicarious living" one of the keys of real life? Then how can the study of the novel, past and present, be a childish pastime? Bacon said three hundred years ago that "it is a subject of very noble inquiry to inquire of the most subtle perceptions for it is another key to open nature, as well as the senses and something better." Since Bacon, science has explored the world of matter with an astounding practical success. But humanity? But nature? But the universe itself! Is it that "soundless, scentless, and mechanical mass hurrying purposelessly through space and time" which even the startling discoveries of science have failed either to explain or to dismiss as unexplainable? Is not science itself repudiating a "purely scientific" concept of truth, and turning to the testimony of great poetry as the supreme light on nature, to the message of great novelists as the ultimate evidence on human mentality?

I feel not the slightest compunction in confessing that the study of the novel seems to me as capable as the study of stars and atoms of leading us towards a general view of life. At a certain depth—or height or distance, if you like—all sincere and disinterested research meets on common ground. A philosophy of wholes, not of parts, is in the air. We live in an expectant age. Never was it so full of great expectations since Descartes. Is it Whitehead who was writing but yesterday that "in a certain sense everything is everywhere and at all times. . . . Every spatio-temporal standpoint mirrors the world"?

The fact that our leading novelists cogitate on their art and its connection with the general order of things merely reflects a mental revolution that is going on in all departments of human knowledge. Two of these novelists, towering above all others, have given us since the war both precepts and examples of an importance that far exceeds that of all my "references" above quoted. One is dead: Marcel Proust. The other is in his full vigor: André Gide. They are the sources of "sources." Gide's "École des Femmes" will soon give me an opportunity of sketching their influence.

Boswell's "Life of Johnson" has now been issued in a Swedish translation in two handsome volumes, which represent the first complete translation of the work. The translator is Dr. Harald Heyman, who has annotated the work more fully than any previous editor, Croker and Hill excepted. "Lyrical Selections from Thomas Hardy" is another Swedish translation.

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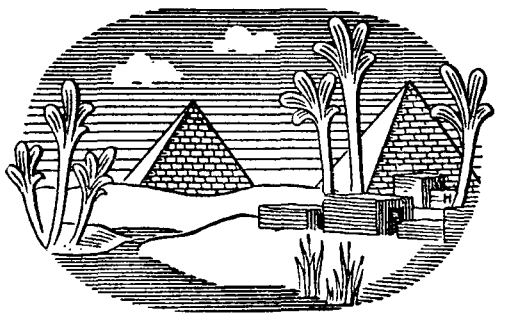

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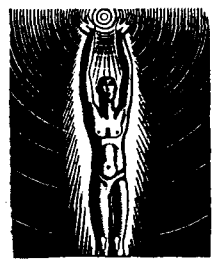

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Attention is called to the rules printed below.

We print this week some verses left over from recent competitions.

LINES TO A NEGLECTED POET

I

WE will build a house for You,
homeless and oppressed:
For even foxes have their holes, and
birds of air their nest.
We'll furnish it with oaken pews to
hold the Sunday guest.

The windows shall be stained with
gold and rose and purple stain,
A gentle Shepherd left and right, a
crucifix of pain.
(Memorials, these are, to men whose
only thought was gain!)

There will be song and ritual; and
dignity will pray;
And unoffending lips will speak
(what unctuous words they'll
say!
For those who pay the piper pick the
tune that he shall play.)

The song arose, the prayer took wing,
the sermon gave a bound,
And in a solitary place a Sheep-
herder they found.
But Jesus stooped and with His finger
wrote upon the ground.

HOMER M. PARSONS.

II

When Francis Jeffrey (in his *time*
and of it)
Had catalogued the poets he had
known
—Southey and Shelley, Wordsworth,
Crabbe and Scott,
Keats and Lord Byron, without-music
Moore—
He said that you—and Campbell—
would endure;
And Mrs. Hemans also. She was
pure.

Your *elegance and taste (pursued the*
prophet)
—Croly had taste and so had Ather-
stone—
Were "consummate" and "fine";
"the common lot"
(For vehemence and passion were re-
jected)
You took for theme. "The upper
ranks" affected
Your contemplative mood; the just
reflected
On human life, *the wherefore, how,*
and why,
Compact within less than a hundred
pages.
—Hark to our Jeffreys, how they
prophesy
What Rogers *will be read in after*
ages.

ARJEH.

IN THE QUARTIER

(Lines without adjectives or adverbs)
Let idlers watch for flirts and fools,
Artists or daubers, triflers,. tools!
Before us towers the School of
Schools.

Through byeways to the walks we
tread
Throng ghosts, of glory or of dread,
And souls by which the world is led.

(May Abelard and Heloise,
Haunting the haunters, craving ease,
With passion burn, with sorrow
freeze?)

Master of Arts, François Villon
Smirked at the wreath starvation won,
And to his doom of gloom was gone.

From wound of war and prayer of
pain
Arrived the Cavalier of Spain,
The Jesuits' Order in his brain.

Popes, and Pascal—saints, and Rous-
seau—
Names, titles, which the ages know,
From parchment or from tablet glow.

And Charlemagne, in mail and crown,
Laid the foundation of renown,
That Robespierre might wear the
gown!

Monks burned the oil on scrolls to
pore:
Light kindled light—and radium tore
The darkness of creation's core.

The rays of guidance we may see
Shine from the schools that shine
from thee,
O Mother University!

Let gazers yawn at flirts and fools,
Artists and daubers, triflers, tools!
In awe and might and silence rules
The grandeur of the Queen of
Schools.

CHARLES D. CAMERON.

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45 Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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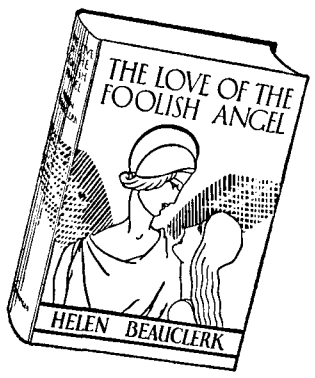

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Belles Lettres

THE POLITICS OF LAURENCE STERNE. By LEWIS PERRY CURTIS. Oxford University Press. 1929. $3.

Professor Cross in his life of Sterne spoke of the rumor that Sterne in early life wrote political articles for a York newspaper, but he was unable definitely to identify the paper as either the Tory *York Courant* or the Whig *York Journal*. Mr. Curtis has unearthed a few surviving copies of the *York Gazetteer*, and shown that this was the paper that Sterne wrote for in the years 1741 to 1742, in connection with the heated election of 1742. But most of the numbers have disappeared, and the controversy between Sterne and "J. S." appeared not in the *Gazetteer* but in the *Courant*. Mr. Curtis goes very thoroughly into the situation, local and political, and the people involved. Sterne subsequently apologized, went over to the Tories, and took no further part in politics; and this change was the beginning of his quarrel with his uncle, the Precentor.

Literary biography offers this singular phenomenon: an extraordinary book is written (two, in this case) which implies something extraordinary in the writer. Literary interpretation as well as biographical humanity is involved. The scholar spreads his nets for anything that may be bearing on the matter. He turns his searchlight here on the city of York in the year 1741, because Laurence Sterne lived there and hard by, vicar of Sutton, nephew of a cathedral dignitary, twenty-seven years old, and seeking preferment. Under the searchlight a group of long forgotten people leap out of their peaceful oblivion, and reenact their quarrels, ambitions, and heartburnings, for no other reason than that someone among them afterwards wrote a book or two, so curious, so interesting, that generation after generation people have read them, and at last have become curious to read everything else he may have written—interested to know that Dr. Slop of "Tristram Shandy" was a caricature of Dr. Burton, adversary of the Precentor uncle; curious as to whether "J. S." was or was not James Scott, and whether Sterne or Caesar Ward of the *Courant* was lying. The searchlight, reaching along the trail of a celebrity, makes visible all kinds of things within the glare of the circle, and people have immortality thrust upon them as accidentally as did the small Pompeiian dog who crumpled up in the hot Vesuvian ashes.

Biography

ALGERNON SYDNEY SULLIVAN. By ANNE MIDDLETON HOLMES. New York State Southern Society. 1929.

The subject of this biography was, principally, a gentleman, and even if he had not been a scholar, an able lawyer, and a striking orator, would have been well worth this memorial. His courage, as in the incidents of the Draft Riots of 1863, his fairness, as in his effort to get the first negro lawyer admitted to the New York bar, his charity, were all peculiarly of the aristocrat. Newspapers called him "the American Chesterfield." He won, some decades before Bryan, the epithet "silver-tongued." When Kossuth was to be welcomed, or de Lesseps, he was the chief speaker. His speeches fill 150 pages, and the tributes to him, one hundred more. The life itself is a clear and many-sided piece of evocation, decidedly interesting. Mrs. Holmes and the Society have erected a considerable monument to this middle-Westerner turned New Yorker. The book, privately printed, is being presented to college libraries.

Fiction

THE BLADED BARRIER. By JOSEPH BUSHNELL AMES. 1929. $2.

The last book to be completed by the author before his death in 1928, this weird mystery-adventure romance is laid in the wilds of Lower California. Two young prospectors, down on their luck, chance upon a dying Mexican, mortally stabbed by unknown assassins. His expiring words and gift to them of a large unset emerald have an import which sends the two, joined now by a grizzled soldier of fortune, off on a perilous treasure-hunt in the uncharted depths of the Peninsula. They penetrate through desert and jungle into a sinister valley solitude, to the very brink of their goal, but are then made captive by a strange savage race of Aztec-Mongol origin, the forgotten descendants of an age long antedating the Spanish Conquest. Though the sheerest hokum, we guarantee that the yarn will enthrall those who fancy horrors of a particularly bloodcurdling and nightmarish kind.

BARRON IXELL: CRIME BREAKER. By OSCAR SCHISGALL. Longmans, Green. 1929. $2.

Four mystery novelettes, designed to feature the extraordinary detection powers of Ixell, an American sleuth at work abroad on sensational Continental crimes, make up the present volume. The plot of each story is an infinitely complicated, not to say, original piece of invention, the scenes of action, successively, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, and Geneva. It is in the last named city that Ixell solves a crime problem which, if not his supreme triumph, seems fully typical of the man's ratiocinative genius. While the League of Nations is in session, a Russian delegate is abducted and held for a large ransom, but Ixell quickly discloses that the missing personage has hidden himself away and aims to collect for his own use the sum demanded for his release. The book seems to be something of a novelty in this over-populous field.

TRUST WESLEY: By B. L. JACOT. Little, Brown. 1929. $2.

Although the fun in this English light novel is said to be uproarious, the book conveyed to us no impression of humor save that of puerile rough-house and heavy clowning. Wesley, the irrepressible, fourteen-year-old son of an American billionaire, has a mischieveous habit of running away from his parents, but at the end of these jaunts he invariably returns unharmed. He again does the vanishing act while sojourning with the family in London, his companion of the moment a sidewalk artist, and it is the pair's efforts to remain at large, hotly pursued by daddy, which fills the balance of the tale.

WE ARE THE DEAD. By ANN REID. Harpers. 1929. $2.50.

Ella Burns was a very ordinary girl; perhaps she had even less spiritual and physical vigor than the average peasant woman of the English mining community where she lived. At any rate, life crushed her completely. What a series of disasters Miss Reid throws onto the shoulders of this poor girl! First, there is seduction by a young miner; second, a loveless, leering marriage to a lustful husband; third, the death of her child; and finally, the death of her father, who had been her only friend. Miss Reid gives us detailed accounts of these various difficulties, and somewhat unnecessarily adds a lingering, circumstantial history of the pains attending the birth of Ella's child. The whole novel is under the suspicion of being altogether more gloomy and dispiriting than is necessary. Horrors are piled on horrors just a little too high. The best bit in the book is the sketch of the girl's mother; she is utterly loathsome, a truly vivid character. Miss Reid writes powerfully rather than effectively. Her plot is not disciplined and guided so that it shall affect us most deeply. But this is only her first novel.

Juvenile

(*The Children's Bookshop will appear next week*)

THE RUNAWAY PAPOOSE. By GRACE MOON. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. $2.

Here is a well-written book that should prove interesting to children. Its author shows considerable knowledge of the customs and country of the Hopi and Navajo Indians. Her story chronicles the adventures of a little lost Hopi girl and a Navajo boy as they wander about the deserts and mesas seeking the girl's parents. A good deal of Indian lore is interpolated throughout the book.

A few incongruities present themselves to a person familiar with the Indians under description. Papoose, for instance, is Algonquin for small boy, and is not a word used for Indian baby in the Southwest. A Hopi child could no more understand Navajo than an English child could understand Hindustani. That an Indian child could be lost in its own country and not quickly found would be highly improbable. Also, Hopi Indians are exceedingly communistic and do not go about seeking new home places.

The illustrations that accompany Miss Moon's text are not particularly pleasing, nor are they adequate to the very good descriptions.

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PLUM TO PLUM JAM. By JANET SMALLEY. Morrow. 1929. $1.75.

Children who know their "Rice to Rice Pudding" will welcome this new volume by Mrs. Smalley. Like that earlier one it uses the method of "This Is the House that Jack Built" to tell its tales of how things come to be, and accompanies its cumulative narratives with drawings colored in bright blues and reds, with blacks and darker browns to offset the gayer hues. The illustrations are animated and often amusing, and ought to provide as delectable entertainment for the child too young to read the text for himself as for the one who can associate words with the drawings.

THE BATTER AND SPOON FAIRIES. By EDNA TEALL. Harpers. 1928. $2.

Two lines of idea pursue one another through this book as they do in a fugue in two parts. It is a cook book and a book of food-lore collected from historical, mythological, and folk sources. A little girl, called "Frisky," is taught to cook by "Big Chef," who is a gentleman, a scholar, and a cook. She discovers a fairy who appears in the apple tree and tells her stories about foodstuffs. Frisky becomes supremely entranced with cooking, and gradually her enthusiasm spreads until, at the climax of the story, the whole town has a community Christmas dinner at which all the old rites that Frisky has learned—the ceremony of the Boar's head and the Peacock pie, etc.—are observed.

Interest is skilfully maintained throughout the book by the shifting of emphasis between the cooking information and the food-lore. Frisky compiles a cook book, and many of her recipes are interwoven with the account of her cooking successes and tribulations. She finds such joy in cooking that she determines to become an evangelist and start cooking clubs all over the country. At the back of the book the author, who is Home Page and Cookery Editor of the Newark *Evening News*, has appended plans for cooking clubs.

RED PLUME OF THE ROYAL NORTHWEST MOUNTED. By EDWARD H. WILLIAMS. Harpers. 1928. $1.75.

Mr. Williams by this title continues his series of boy's books relating the adventures of an American white boy, Dick Webster or Red Plume, who escaped from the Northern Cheyennes near the Canadian border. An adopted Cheyenne, speaking the Cheyenne tongue, and a skilful scout besides, Dick now is summoned to be aide and interpreter for Sergeant Macleod of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police in the hunt for a squawman desperado who had crossed the border. Disappointingly to Dick (and, one may say, to the reader), in the promising first chapter Dick is shot through the leg. Thereafter for seven chapters, the bulk of the book, he is confined to quarters in a Hudson's Bay Company trading post and action is confined also to fireside story-telling of episodes more or less connected with life in the Canadian Northwest! In the ninth or last chapter he has recovered sufficiently to go with Sergeant Macleod and "get your man," in accordance with the traditions of the service. There are four full-page pictures by Charles Durant.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANDREW. By ELIZA ORNE WHITE. Houghton Mifflin. 1928. $1.75.

THE TUCK AWAY TWINS. By CHARLOTTE BREWSTER JORDAN. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. $2.

These books by successful writers of children's stories make an interesting contrast. "The Adventures of Andrew" is about a very real six year old boy who is always in trouble with the maids and his uncompromising Aunt Josephine, while an understanding young aunt saves the situation and teaches him how to do what psychologists call "adjusting to his environment." It is simply and delightfully told, consistent with the childish point of view, so that it will appeal to children from six or eight to twelve and incidentally to grown-ups who like to read aloud a wholesome child's story.

"The Tuck-Away Twins" is also supposed to be for children from eight to twelve, but we would give it to considerably older ones for the style is not direct, and it is full of negro dialect and of jokes and philosophy that only much older children or grown-ups could appreciate. It is a sequel to "Tuck Away House," giving the history of the youngest of the family—the girl twins—from the time they are six through High School, together with the fortunes of their older brothers and sisters. One feels that it reflects not nearly so much the point of view of the twins as that of some affectionate aunt observing the family.

THE JOLLY ROGER: A PIRATE BOOK FOR BOYS. Milton Bradley. 1928. $2.50.

The writer who refers patronizingly to his "young readers" and lets them know, tacitly or otherwise, that he wishes to edify them, thereby labels himself unfamiliar with the fundamentals of reaching them. Mr. French, who has done other compilations of pirate and sea stories, lets this fault influence his whole collection of true yarns about the "original sea-fighters."

The book is beautifully made. Its end papers are reproduced from a 1720 map of the West Indies dug out of the Harvard Library, and its illustrations are authentic old engravings. The tales it tells are true tales, and their authors are such standard names as Charles Reade, Daniel Defoe, James Fenimore Cooper, and R. N. Fortune. It contains the true story of Philip Ashton, told by himself, and a closing chapter on "The Ways of the Pirates"—all material in itself unquestionable.

But let the average boy reader see a paragraph such as that in Mr. French's introduction to the Ashton tale: "I present this story to my young readers with absolute assurance of its verity and veracity in every detail and in the belief that they will agree that truth is, verily, stranger than fiction." Then try to get him to read the story. I doubt that he'd do it. Authentic as the book is, valuable as it may be as a historical collection, truthful as is the picture it presents when contrasted with the ordinary blood-and-thunder pirate fiction yarn, it is not a piece of boy-literature calculated to make youthful America late for its supper. Regrettable though it be, a boy would much prefer fiction with the virtues of compactness, plot and atmosphere he can visualize to truthful, historical, wordy, and, frequently, dry-as-dust fact. Boys don't read "The Deerslayer," and there is no reason to suppose that they will read Cooper pirate stories.

(*Continued on next page*)

IN APRIL EVENINGS
WHEN THE SCENT OF LILACS . . .

"In April evenings, when the scent of lilacs drifted like rain on the silver air, she had walked with a lover among the tender whispers of the delicate green twilights. He was unredeemed; he was disreputable; he was a hopeless fugitive from the Blood of the Lamb; yet she had walked with him all those April evenings, and she had loved him in secret through the other months of the year. In spite of his sins, which were as scarlet, and his circumstances, which were beggarly, she might have been faithful to him, if only he had respected her. After almost fifty years (and God alone knew what those years had meant to her), there were recollections that still hurt her pride like the sting of a hornet. Through all the wind and mist of time, she could look back and remember the warm scent of the lilacs and a white star shining down on her pure thoughts, which were occupied with the salvation of sinners. There were all these things in the past, and none of them would bear thinking about. Life was like that, she supposed. In spite of amazing grace and being washed in the Blood of the Lamb. But how could a woman know? How could any woman know that life wouldn't bear thinking about?"

This is Carl Van Doren's favourite passage from Miss Glasgow's brilliant and ironic comedy of morals. Others read with a special delight Victoria's interview with Milly or Mr. Littlepage's visit to Mrs. Dalrymple. On almost every page is an epigram or a felicitous phrase that will pass into the permanent heritage of the English language.

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BY ELLEN GLASGOW

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JOSEPH AUSLANDER

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The kid just puts it his own way
Straight from the shoulder as the Kid
Always did the things he did.
He got his start on Henry Street
And then went down to Hell dead-beat.
He meets a skirt and she is tall.
Her voice is like a waterfall.
But she was Spike's. Now Spike is dead;
The kid put a bullet in Spike's head.
And then the word came through the kid
Had to die for what he did.

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Poetry

THE SINGING SWORD. By G. LAWRENCE GROOM. Drawings by CLINTON BALMER. Harpers. 1929. $2.

This volume is introduced to American readers by Mr. Percy Hutchinson, who compares Mrs. Groom to Keats, and by Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, who likens her, in one rapturous phrase, to Shakespeare and Swinburne. The degree of Mr. Le Gallienne's enthusiasm may be estimated from his opening sentense. "I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Lawrence Groom's verse with this beautiful lyric:

Oh, they have laid my only dear, my pretty
dear, my lovely dear,
With all her laughter stilled and quiet lips
without a sigh,
In the Stranger's land, a cruel land, that has
no heart to understand;
And laden with my sorrow the wind goes
keening by.
Oh, she would lay her little hand, her tender
hand, her toil-worn hand,
Within my own so softly at the closing of
the day;
And resting so, and holding so, together we
would homeward go,
Through misty, moonlit meadows all sweet
with dewy hay,
And now I go the homeward way, the well-
known way, the lonely way,
Through misty, moonlit meadow when the
moon is riding high,
With the echo of her little feet, her dancing
feet, her darling feet,
Within my heart forever until the day I die.

"The spontaneous melody of this," continues Mr. Le Gallienne, "its artful simplicity, its lover's tenderness, give it a rare place among contemporary lyrics." A rare place indeed, for it is some time since we have been asked to thrill at "winds that go keening by," "misty moonlit meadows," "the echo of her little feet, her darling feet, her dancing feet," and the rest of the jingling clichés set to Alfred Noyes's lilac-time rhythms.

But this volume, it may be objected, is not merely a collection of limpid lyrics, and the objection would be sustained. "The Singing Sword" is a long, ever-so-romantic narrative, in five books, interspersed with songs and interludes; there are also a proem and an envoi. Thus it should satisfy all who sigh for the dear, dead days, for troubadours and love-philtres, for lovely, amorous queens and conniving (and equally beautiful) tiring-maids, for tournaments and duellos and erotic euphuisms and the medieval glamour which exists only in print. Mrs. Groom has the ingredients at her finger-ends; she mixes her colors with a warmth that is appropriately—or supposedly—*moyen age.*

For those who wish the flavor of Swinburnian rapture diluted with rose-water, embellished with designs out of Burne Jones, prettified by Anning Bell—the flavor, in short, of a gift-book of the late 'nineties, "The Singing Sword" can be lavishly recommended.

Religion

THE INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS. By *Theodore* Francis Powys. Viking.

THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST IN MODERN CHRISTIANITY. By *John Baillie.* Scribners. $2.

SUNDAY IN THE MAKING. By *Charles Herbert Heustis.* Abingdon Press. $2.

A DISCONTENTED OPTIMIST. By *M. S. Rice.* Abingdon. $1.25.

BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By *William David Schermerhorn.* Life & Service Series. 75 cents.

THE STORY OF RELIGION. By *Joseph McCabe.* Stratford. $5.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE. Harcourt, Brace. $6.50.

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL. By *A. W. F. Blunt.* Oxford University Press. $1.25.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK. Oxford University Press. $1.50.

TRUTH AND THE FAITH. By *Hartley Burr Alexander.* Holt. $3.

THE HYMNS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW. By *Philo Adams Otis.* Chicago: Summy.

PRAY. By *Charles Edward Locke.* Methodist Book Concern. $1.

THE QUEST OF GOD. By *Casper S. Yost.* Revell. $1.50.

THE WORLD'S MIRACLE. By *Karl Reiland.* Holt. $1.75.

THE GREAT CONJECTURE. By *Winifield Kirkland.* Holt. $1.25.

BIBLICAL DOCTRINES. By *Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield.* Oxford University Press. $4 net.

THE TERCENTENARY YEAR. Reformed Church in America. Prepared by *Edgar Franklin Romig.* Published by the Church. 25 East 22nd Street, New York City. $3.

Natural Conduct

By EDWIN BINGHAM COPELAND

"HITCH your wagon to a star" meant to Emerson the essential oneness of utility and righteousness. Here we have, from the hand of a scientist, a striking commentary on this Emersonian dictum. "Reading him is like taking a brisk walk with a leader who covers much ground through a delightful country. The short sentences, the simple words, the close connection of each part with its predecessor, mark a style that reminds you of the best of Tyndall and Huxley."—*William McAndrew* $3.50

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John Galsworthy

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, 2 Bramerton Street, Chelsea, S. W., London, England.

E. M. J., Clifton Springs, N. Y., is looking for a book on the romance of archæology, and thinks there was once one with this very title. Gregory Mason's "Silver Cities of Yucatan" and the recent very fascinating "Four Faces of Siva" (Casey) are modern and popular treatments in point," the inquirer says, "but I am also anxious to read something recent concerning excavations in Egypt and the Orient."

James Baikie's "Life of the Ancient East" (Macmillan) might quite as well have been called "The Romance of Archæology"; it is an explanation and record of how excavations are made, filled with the spirit of the true explorer of the past, and able to communicate to an unusual degree the sense of impending thrill that must be ever present in these enterprises. The excavations in question are in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece; I have been trailing along after archæologists in more modern localities, but still in search of relics of a considerable antiquity, for I have been walking the Wall of Hadrian—which our schoolbooks told us passed through lonely lands, and they did not in the least exaggerate. Mile after mile you can walk, after you have left the comfortable George Inn at Chollerford and the almost completely excavated Roman station of Cilernum nearby, and watch the Great Wall riding the crest of hill after hill, from whose tops you can see but one dark ancient farmstead at a time and sometimes not that, with heather still staining the northward horizon as it did when the Centurion in "Puck of Pook's Hill" was on duty there. At Amboglanna (the camps still keep their Roman names even on the lips of the countryfolk) we came upon archæologists at work, and it was quite thrilling enough, if I never go to Egypt. I have read all I could lay hand upon concerning the Wall, the best being Jessie Mothersole's "Hadrian's Wall," but for a brief account with fine pictures the best by far is to be found in "Wonders of the Past," a four-volume survey of exploration and reconstruction, edited by J. A. Hammerton from articles by specialists, and published by Putnam at $5 a volume and worth at least all of that. It has also the best article on Stonehenge; indeed, wherever any "wonder of the past" that I have seen is treated, it is treated in a more satisfactory manner than in any guide-book I have seen. So I wholeheartedly recommend it, as a family picture-book that may soak into young consciousnesses and make lasting results. The "Cambridge Ancient History" (Macmillan) is accompanied by a marvellous book of plates of ancient art and excavated remains.

Professor Baikie's "Century of Excavation in the Land of the Pharaohs" (Revell) is a similarly inspiring account of what has been done in Egypt; Arthur Weigall's "Glory of the Pharaohs" (Putnam), besides bringing back much of the life of the time, contains personal experiences of the author in excavating; Robert Koldewey's "Excavations at Babylon" (Macmillan: $10) is a detailed, carefully illustrated record up to 1912; H. R. H. Hall's "Ægean Archæology" (Medici Society) shows the results of excavations of prehistoric Greece. But Professor Baikie's first-named work gives a general idea of what has been done in all three regions, and makes a fine beginning-book. And now, at just this point in the narrative, comes Holt's fall list, with the news that in October they are to publish "The Romance of Archæology," by R. V. D. Magoffin and Emily Davis, full of thrills and fine photographs. So here is an advance note for it.

H. W. C., Terre Haute, Ind., says that as there is no Baedeker for French North Africa other than for those cities on the coast that come in the Mediterranean volume, he would like whatever there is in the way of travel literature for this region.

THE Baedeker to which reference is made is, of course, "The Mediterranean, Seaports and Sea Routes" (Scribner), which includes only the coasts of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. A "Blue Guide," one of the admirable English series edited by Findlay Muirhead (Macmillan), was announced at the opening of the present season as in course of preparation, to cover "French Northern Africa."

"What About North Africa?" by Hamish McLaurin (Scribner); "Rambles in North Africa," by Albert Wilson (Little, Brown), a large illustrated work; "From Corsair to Riffian," by Isabel Anderson (Houghton Mifflin), which includes Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; "Morocco from a Motor," by Paul Vernon (Macmillan), illustrated in color, and "Algeria from Within," by R. V. C. Bodley (Bobbs-Merrill), are all of fairly recent publication.

G. M. V., Cambridge, Mass., needs a Spanish cook-book, written in English, but with recipes for characteristic Spanish dishes, especially "arroz valenciano."

IF such there be, will someone let us know? Some months ago I was asked concerning the public there might be for a volume of ancient Spanish-American dishes such as brighten life in our own Southwest. I thought there would be a demand for such information, but the literary agents later consulted by the author did not agree, and so far as I know, this book was never printed. At the time, I looked for Spanish cookery books and found none in English. I wish there were, and that I might therein find how "the Spaniard" who keeps the red and yellow restaurant under the arches of Swallow Street, just off Regent Street, manages to blend ripe oranges and olives in just the right proportion in the sauce that surrounds an Iberian chicken.

BEFORE the reply about North Africa gets too far back in this copy, I must tack on a postscript from a letter just received: "Should you ever be asked," says *E. M. F., Wood's Hole, Mass.*," to recommend a very readable book on the architecture of North Africa, you might like to suggest Pierre Champion's 'Le Maroc et Ses Villes d'Art.'"

STEVEN T. BYINGTON, Ballard Vale, Mass., says his abridged edition of the "Tales of Baron Munchausen," published by Ginn in the spring of 1928, may be the book for which recent inquiry was made through this column. "I left out very little of the original Munchausen, which is the part where the famous stories are; of the supplements added later a lot can be left out without sacrificing anything that anyone cares much for. There was some account of the times in which 'Munchausen' was written, and some of the facts I had to record were as good as M's own work." It costs 68 cents.

H. W. B., Fort Collins, Colorado, asks for a book presenting in a popular style the work and theories of Freud, Adler, and Jung, whose own writings are a "bit too much" for this reader.

THERE are several popular summaries or introductions, but I do not know that any of them are easier to understand than the "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" of Freud himself, published by Liveright. However, André Tridon's book, "Psychoanalysis" (Viking), though it was published ten years ago, gives a summary of the views of Freud, Jung, Adler, and others; other introductions are "Psychoanalysis for Normal People," by G. Coster (Oxford University Press); "Modern Theories of the Unconscious," by W. L. Northridge (Dutton); "The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life," by A. G. Tansley (Dodd, Mead); Brill's "Fundamental Conceptions of Psychoanalysis" (Harcourt, Brace); and one of the best of them all, Beatrice Hinkle's "The Recreating of the Individual" (Harcourt, Brace).

C. K. H. Carrollton, Ga., asks if there are historical or descriptive works about the glass factories of Murano, and if anyone recalls a novel published at least thirty years ago whose heroine, a little girl, worked in a Murano glass factory.

AS for the novel, reports are called for; as for the descriptions, I fear they will have to be picked up in minute pieces from the histories and collector's books about old glass in general. The largest and most luxurious of these is "European Glass," by W. Buckley (Houghton Mifflin), limited edition, $25; there is also "Old Glass and How to Collect It," by J. S. Lewis (Dodd, Mead); "Old Glass, European and American," by N. Moore (Stokes); and "Collecting Old Glass," a small book by J. H. Yoxall (Doubleday, Doran).

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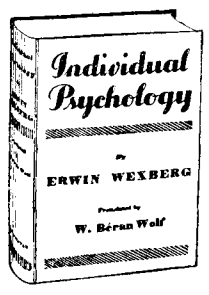

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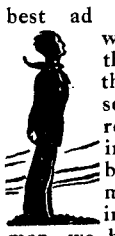

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Lest We Forget

WE reprint here an editorial which appeared in the New York *Evening Post* as long ago as 1911:

Coleridge has a remark somewhere about the danger that a literary man's executors may make sad work of his brains. Of that we have had many examples. But there is a more poignant peril. It is that those in legal charge of a dead writer's documents and letters may be guilty of outrages upon taste and even breaches of good faith, which he in his grave cannot resent, but from which name must suffer. In this city for example, there has been this week a sale of the effects of a well-known figure in our literary world, and in them have been included letters to him by living men of the most intimate and confidential character. These he had treasured, as was his right, but now that he is gone they are as coolly thrown upon the market as if they were merely his ink-stand or candle-snuffers. In some instances these letters have been of so markedly private a nature, being intended for his eye alone and filled with comment upon men and things that could not with propriety even be handed about, much less sold at auction, that their alarmed and mortified authors have been forced to go to the sale themselves and buy them in.

It is little to say that such things add a new terror to death. An indiscreet biographer is bad enough. We remember what a wholesale burning of old letters and diaries set in on the occasion of the publication of Froude's "Life of Carlyle." If such revelations could be made, which of us is safe? That was the horrified question which literary men in England and the United States at once asked themselves, and soon the chimneys were smoking with manuscripts that might make scandalous printing after the owners were dead. We know what Tennyson thought of this sort of breaking every seal and betraying the trust; but it probably never entered into his imagination that an executor could seek to coin money out of letters in which friend breathed confidences to friend. Matters which were so delicate that they could not, either legally or with decency, be published in a biography, it seems to be thought may be knocked down by the auctioneer's hammer to whoever will buy.

In this instance it is only necessary to ask what the dead man himself would have thought and said of such a proceeding, in order to perceive what an affront it is to his memory. Himself of proved fastidiousness in taste, and of the nicest loyalty in friendship, he would have been cut to the quick if he could have fancied such a brutal disposal—or attempt to dispose—of communications of which he would no more have thought of making a public prey than he would of the whispered interchange of lovers. A methodical man, he had kept these letters, along with a mass of others, but the idea of making merchandise of them would have been as foreign to his soul as it would have been cruel. To take a dead man's skull and grow in it a pot of basil is a sweet and wholesome thing compared with this plan of doing something which would be excruciating to him in order to make a pot of money.

A current Spanish novel is entitled, "The Dead Command." In the case referred to, they evidently do not, if their known or easily inferred wishes could be taken as a command. But even the living have some rights! As a mere matter of law, we should suppose that this hawking of the private letters of men still alive and sensitive could be enjoined. They certainly could not be printed without permission; how, then, sold in manuscript? But, of course, the gentlemen involved did not wish to advertise their sense of outrage, or actually to make a bad matter worse by taking legal proceedings. They quietly put up the amount of cash necessary to secure possession of what was really their own all the time. Rather than permit any imputation to rest upon the discretion of their dead friend, or allow any chance collector to display their secret communings with their old confidant, they were ready to make a pecuniary sacrifice—and for some of them it was considerable—and say no more about it.

We are glad to think that such peculiar displays of callousness in regard to the feelings of both the dead and the living are very rare. But they ought to be entirely impossible. Botanizing on a mother's grave is respectable beside offering to barter away the most cherished and sacred tokens of friendship belonging to the dead.

Perverted Perversity

MONSIEUR VÉNUS. By RACHILDE. Translated by MADELEINE BOYD. Introduction by ERNEST BOYD. Preface by MAURICE BARRÈS. Illustrations by MAJESKA. Limited Edition. New York: Covici, Friede. 1929.

IT is nearly fifty years since "Monsieur Vénus" startled and shocked Paris the unshockable—and its author, for many years a distinguished French novelist, is still alive, a lady of seventy-nine—and the book is at last translated in America. Have we then merely reached our eighteen-nineties? Or are the perversities of the eighteen-nineties an eternal phase of civilization which merely happen to obtain expression in literature at certain periods? "Monsieur Vénus" dates terribly; in its fondness for oriental draperies, perfumes, and hashish it smells of the lamps of Gautier and Baudelaire; and yet it does not date entirely. Its author, to-day Mme. Vallette, wife of the editor of the *Mercure de France*, was then Marguerite Eymery, a girl of twenty, who took the name Rachilde from a medieval Swedish nobleman whom she had called up by table-rapping; she had been writing since the age of twelve and at fourteen had attempted suicide when her parents tried to cure her literary ambitions by means of marriage, but she was still unknown and starving in Paris when in two weeks she wrote "Monsieur Vénus." The book not only made her notorious but—more important—it opened the doors of the symboliste cafés to her and gave her an established place in the radical literary world. Her wild, unbelievable tale, imitative and obviously adolescent as it was, with one or two passages of sheer rant, was still what Maurice Barrès called it, "this marvellous 'Monsieur Vénus'"—marvellous in its clarity, its imaginative boldness, its occasional depth of psychology.

The story is one of perverted perversity. Its Sapphic heroine, the high-born androgyne, Raoule de Vénérande, is enamored of a beautiful and effeminate lout, Jaques Silvert, whom she loves as if he were a woman, making him her mistress and then her wife. Raoule's unsuccessful endeavor to force this marriage upon society, and Silvert's degeneration into the sex anomaly he was destined to become, lead to his virtual assassination to appease her wrath. The complex and twisted psychological situation gives opportunity for the subtle analysis which the Symbolistes enjoyed to dearly, and in which, so far as the novel was concerned, Rachilde pointed the way. Remy de Gourmont, who followed her, had a surer touch, but in comparison with Rachilde's spontaneity he seems almost pedantic. "Monsieur Vénus" is born not of observation or experience, but of dreamful fancy. To the innocent moralist it may be an illuminating illustration of whither the adolescent girl's fancy sometimes tends. To the critic, for whom perversity is a theme like any other, it is of value, aside from its historic interest, for a kind of desperate, feverish imagination, usually chastened, not in content but in style, by a sense of artistic form. The preface by Barrès, the introduction by Ernest Boyd, and the excellent translation by Madeleine Boyd, give cachet to this edition of a work which should not be dismissed—or accepted—in American fashion—as sheer pornography.

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Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian poet, who lives at Medan, near Paris, has just explained why he quitted Belgium forever. The atmosphere of Ghent, he told the *Revue Belge,* was adverse to all artistic endeavor at the period when he was young. "If I had remained in Belgium," he added, "I should have become a 'miserable macrobite,' among the small bourgeois who surrounded me. Belgium professed at the time when I lived there a deep hatred of letters. Men who had talent found themselves up against things, unless they gave up their art. It was only toward 1880 that things began to change. You can hardly imagine the lengths people went to in my time when my two works, 'Les Serres Chaudes' (Hot Houses) and 'La Princesse Maleine' appeared."

THE Club of Odd Volumes has announced the publication of two hitherto unpublished journals of John James Audubon, the only diaries or his known to be in existence. Presented in 1913 through the generosity of Mr. J. R. Thayer to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, they cover two different periods of Audubon's life, the first his journey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, and his residence there (1820-1821., and the second the years during which he was obtaining subscriptions for his "Birds of America" (1940 and 1843). These journals have been edited by Howard Corning, and are to be printed at the Plimpton Press under the supervision of William Dana Orcutt.

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"It seems that Bukharin has been deposed from the Communist International on the ground that he is 'overcome by pessimism, and has lost faith in the power of the proletariat.' It seems to be very much the case of Mr. Shaw," says the London *Times.*

According to an English journal, "the representation of the Deity—'clothed in a red chasuble over a blue jerkin'—in the Canterbury Cathedral Festival, has passed with less protest than might have been expected. It is, of course, only a revival of the medieval practice; in the Morality Plays both God and the Devil were familiar figures. When Mr. Poel first revived 'Everyman,' the Deity appeared on the battlemented roof of the Charterhouse and elsewhere; but of recent years we have only heard a Voice. In 'Outward Bound' the clergyman in white ducks who appears in the last act is not described as God, but he seems to have certain attributes of divinity, and one presumes that Mr. Sutton Vane made the compromise for fear of giving offense. There was no such qualm in the case of Walter Hasenclever, who recently produced a revue in Berlin in which God was represented in golfing costume."

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DRAWING FROM WORDS SUCH BEAUTY AS KREISLER DRAWS FROM STRINGS. . . .
ARTHUR SCHNITZLER AND THE SOUL OF VIENNA. . . .

Love Story is the title of another book just released by *The Inner Sanctum*. The author modestly prefers to hide her identity behind the pseudonym THELMA WOODHILL. Even the acclaim of the first two reviews failed to shake her from this high resolve:

LOVE STORY *is so remarkably organized, its emotions so thoroughly exploited and its climactic construction so satisfying, aesthetically, that the reader is likely to be overwhelmed by its undeniable power. . . . A careful search for a false note fails to reveal even an exaggeration. Technically, this novel is one of the finest we have seen this season.*
THE NEW YORK SUN.

An exceptionally good novel. . . . Miss Woodhill has a talent for merciless characterization and a fine sense of drama.
THE NEW YORKER.

NEWS! JOHN COWPER POWYS has just returned from a summer in England. . . . He requested that no news of his book sales or reviews be forwarded to him while abroad, and on reaching *The Inner Sanctum* found that *Wolf Solent* had sold almost ten thousand during his six weeks' absence. . . . ROBERT L. BELIEVE-IT-OR-NOT RIPLEY received 25,000 fan letters in six days. . . . Sotto voce to *Inner Sanctum* clients: Have you noticed the current market quotations on International Paper and Power "C" and Western Union common, the two securities earnestly recommended by your paper-devouring, telegram-consuming correspondents. . . . Macy's reordered SCHNITZLER'S *Little Novels* right after it was put on sale. . . . Big things are predicted for *The Psychology of Happiness* by WALTER B. PITKIN, scheduled for publication on September 19th. . . . It will appeal to everybody who seeks happiness, everybody who thinks about it, and everybody who relishes gossip. . . . Otherwise there are no possibilities in this book. . . . Another tip: watch for the first announcements of *Twelve Against the Gods* by WILLIAM BOLITHO, "the incomparable Bolitho" whose prose has swirled and eddied for many months in a neighboring column. . . . If this chronicle of the world's great throat-slitters and circumstance-manufacturers doesn't set a few rivers on fire, *The Inner Sanctum* will make public restitution to its constituency. . . .
ESSANDESS.

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A NEW bookcase had to be built for the study. That was all too evident. There comes a time when books get too much under the feet, and piles of books toppling in every corner make confusion worse confounded. . . .

So a bookcase had to be built for the study, and now it is installed. It is really two bookcases. One on each side of the mahogany table, with a shelf above, spanning them and running a foot-and-a-half above the table top, upon which sit photographs of a great modern poet, of various others,—and also a collection of small animals that carry out the theme of the five *passe-partouted* old prints below the shelf; the ancient china mastiff (relic of extreme youth), the brown glass bulldog, the large kangaroo (with offspring) from Italy, the white china pig (from Paris) and the gray (seated) china bear, reinforcing portraits below of several tortoises, a dodo, an elephant, a rhinoceros, and a cockatoo. Oh, and we had almost forgotten the noble little caparisoned horse from China (now somewhat piebald from long guard in a dusty New York apartment) that was purchased at Yamanaka's and bestowed upon the writer in the days of high romance. . . .

So much for the mantel-shelf. But what books were to be placed in the narrow, flanking bookcases? One was to hold prose, one poetry; the poetry was to have the place of honor upon the right. . . .

But the volumes of Yeats have got onto the top left-hand shelf, because there are a number of them. Peculiarly enough, the 1906 volume of the lyrical poems once belonged to Sinclair Lewis. And a volume of the poetical works of Lionel Johnson supports his fellow Gael. Then we have four volumes of Miss Cather, two of Virginia Woolf, two of Katherine Mansfield, "They Stooped to Folly" by Ellen Glasgow, and "Thirty Strange Stories" by H. G. Wells. The shelf below is chiefly occupied by young moderns, Ernest Hemingway complete, and volumes by Dos Passos, Glenway Wescott, Thornton Wilder, and Edmund Wilson, together with Leonard Bacon's "Guinea Fowl," and "The Burning Fountain" by Eleanor Carroll Chilton. Below come a mixture of novels and plays, and again poetry has crept in. Dunsany and Colum nudge Whitman and Sir Henry Newbolt. There the late Geoffrey Scott's "Zélide," some essays by Aldous Huxley, several of Helen Beauclerk's novels, and Blunden's "Undertones of War." There also stand Sir Thomas Browne, Ferguson's "Lays of the Western Gael," the poetical works of Shelley, and Ethna Carberry's "The Four Winds of Eirinn." . . .

The top shelf of poetry to the right is chiefly collections. *Imprimis,* "The Oxford Book of English Verse," a gift copy of twenty-five years ago, its leather now sadly scuffed and torn; "The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse" (almost brand new), "The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse," "The Book of Georgian Verse," compiled by William Stanley Braithwaite and dating from 1908, "The Book of Scottish Poetry," "The Dublin Book of Irish Verse," Louis Untermeyer's "Modern American Poetry," and Newbolt's "New Paths on Helicon." There are also collected volumes by Austin Dobson, Masefield, De La Mare, "A. E.," and James Stephens, and an English and an American edition of Francis Thompson's first "Poems." On the shelf below are books of poetry by Flecker, Rachel Annand Taylor, G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Hardy, Herbert Trench, William Ernest Henley, A. E. Housman, Louise Imogen Guiney, Robert Frost, Edward Thomas, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, Ridgely Torrence, Osbert Sitwell, and Humbert Wolfe. . . .

It is a random collection, and works by writers connected with this writer are on other shelves in the study, behind special glass doors. Behind the same glass doors are more miscellaneous books he treasures, such (for instances) as De Quincey and Mangan and Matthew Arnold. But it all starts one pondering upon the wealth of good literature in the world, the large treasury of permanent delights. And the associations of books,—the particular poems, for instance, that ran in one's head for a long time, to be replaced by others, but that still revive old beautiful memories and continue as stars to steer by after so many years! . . .

Take, for one example, the poetry of Herbert Trench. Henry Holt & Company brought out in America in 1908 his "Apollo and the Seaman" in fine blue gold-lettered boards. This is certainly not poetry of the day and hour, and the poet is now well-nigh forgotten. But the book, in many and many of its passages, is underlined throughout by appreciative youth. Trench's philosophy, notes this same brash youth, on the flyleaf, "is summed up in the fifth stanza of the stanzas to Tolstoy." So we turn to that stanza. It reads, in part:

Hence the true faith:—to the uttermost to be
Thyself—to follow up that ecstasy
Compelling—to let being take its course,
Rise like a song, and like a dream be free,
Poised on the breath of its own soul and source:
Enough—the Fountain will re-gather thee!

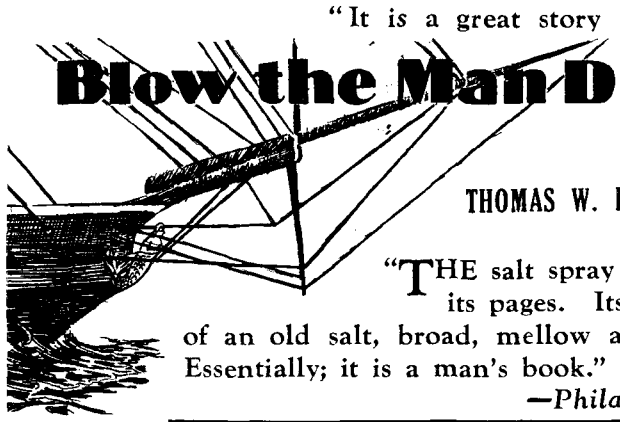
Is the ear of maturity inexact or is there here an echo of the Persian tent-maker, a poet who, in the writer's day, was much in favor with the young? In any event, the appreciation of such philosophy is characteristic of youth. We are God's dreams, says Trench, in the same stanzas, "chanted from some unfathomable joy." Trench, thought the writer at the time, was somewhat Shelleyan. However such a judgment may seem to-day, the Coleridgean title poem of the book has splendid passages, even though they do not bear comparison with Shelley's splendor. Trench is accountable to Ireland, actually, for his feats in language. His conception, in the title-poem, is quite superb. The Seaman, with whom Apollo speaks, has

. . . heard them calling in the streets
That the ship I serve upon—
The great ship Immortality—
Has gone down, like the sun.

The whole poem, in dialogue, is really a discussion of the passing of the age of faith, of the foundering of "that sun-stampt and illumined ship, that keel of mystery . . .

Ah! The inexorable bottom of the page cuts short our reminiscence, we must continue at another time. THE PHOENICIAN.

William McFee *says:*
"It is a great story well told."



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Points of View

Objection

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

The *Saturday Review* has been a very interesting publication to me, but occasionally the degree of unevenness evidenced in some of its reviews tends to produce a reaction among certain readers (I should think), such as is here expressed. It is a bit galling to find certain reviewers occasionally assuming a supercilious attitude or evincing a "gentle" mockery, which is worse than sarcasm, towards the author of a book under discussion. The last instance that comes to my mind was in Frederick J. Teggart's four-thousand-word review of Oswald Spengler's "Decline of the West," Vol. II. While it is not my intention or desire to take exception to an otherwise commendable piece of reviewing (in many respects and from many viewpoints), it nevertheless seems to me that the review pages of your important journal should present a rounded and complete interpretation of any work important enough to receive four thousand words in treatment. I believe, in addition, that it is rather unsportsmanlike for a reviewer who is learned enough to pick flaws to use that advantage when dealing with ideas large enough to admit of certain ambiguities in interpretation. I suppose every author thinks that his contribution—at least his interpretation—is original. In this case the reviewer makes game with an assertion of the author's that is based upon "quality" or "nature" of interpretation rather than "origin" of interpretation,—through a mistaken view of the use of the word "new." It is quite easy to trace from a few familiar examples the origin of "linear" conception in historical interpretation, but Spengler is, unfortunately, not concerned with its origin, —he is concerned with the most available utilization of that interpretation for the benefit of what he calls "Faustian" civilization.

To make his point, appositely enough, the reviewer simulates a strong predilection for "unlinear" concepts. He enumerates the ideas of historians and philosophers of the "linear" point of view and blames Spengler for accepting them without telling us why he, himself, accepts the counter position—except in quoting a two-century-old statement of Fontenelle to the effect that "the human race . . . will never grow old."

The reviewer ridicules the "inattention and disregard" paid by the author to historical "accidents," notably the battle of Actium, yet he fails to mention Spengler's contention of the accidental forces of certain personalities (such as that which dominated Actium) and which Spengler *does* regard and provide for by the assertion that the actions and accidents brought about by great men and great executives, in spite of circumstances, are *seldom* the result of preconsiderations or studied developments. This view may also be disallowed by Professor Teggart, yet even so it does not necessarily admit of the flat statement that the author "strives to uphold a theory which the enumerated facts disprove."

The reviewer also ridicules the idea of historical "intuition" (as expressed in the translated version), yet I am constrained to wonder if, after all, the original intent of the author in making use of such a term was not, perhaps, due to the outgrowth of the same ideas regarding the general uses of psychology for the historian that have found such strong support in recent years among the gentlemen of the American Historical Association.

The technique of economic growth is passing into a super-national rather than a national stage. Perhaps it is even beginning to affect the field of international politics as witnessed in the attempts of national spokesmen to disregard political and national "accidents" because of the pressure of economic necessities which need peace and understanding rather than war. It seems difficult for the "nationalist" to understand this, and hence we have frequent misconceptions and misinterpretations, — whether conscious or unconscious is not essential. Hence, says Spengler, we should "separate the morphologically necessary from the accidental" if we are to actualize a higher culture. So, at the end, he does not differ so terribly from the advocates of "progress" as the reviewer would have us believe.

Please do not think that this particular "point of view" is an attempt to disagree with the ideas of the reviewer or to uphold the merits of the work under discussion. I should prefer, merely, an attitude of courtesy and suspended judgment on a question that has vexed many people and which, since none of us are soothsayers, it is unlikely that we shall be able to solve. I merely take exception to certain interpretations and suggestions in the review that may be construed, however loosely, as "misleading,"—if I may be permitted to employ so harsh a term. I do not like to see the motivating tendencies, the interpretations (when they deal with speculative forces or agencies, or philosophical abstractions), or even the method of presentation used by any author needlessly criticized when the more fundamental part of the reviewer's task remains unfulfilled.

I might mention the same type of attitude prevalent among many of your prominent reviewers, notably, among recent issues, in one reviewer's treatment of "This Man Adams"—a book in which many praiseworthy and original features (especially in the last few chapters) were left unsung, while certain minor circumstances in title and phraseology, of an unfortunate nature, and one very trivial sin of omission were cast into the limelight on a scale large enough to restrain the average reader from perusing a volume that at least possesses the attributes of giving room for a few new turns in thought and fancy, some interesting information, and the pleasure of reading something at least "different" from the usual order of conventionalized and carefully restrained journalism that so frequently passes as the "best" of the current offerings in "literature." On the other hand, books which might require that kind of condemnation, if the public taste in literature is ever to be guided, are frequently passed along with highly flattering superlatives by even the most eminent of critics.

May not your erudite reviewers be assured that their reading public acknowledges their erudition, and may they not be urged, when engaged for their reviewing tasks, to first fulfil their obligations as reviewers in first telling, as truthfully as possible, what the author sets out to do, and then telling us just how truthfully and artistically he seems to do it—blaming the book rather than the author if the accomplishment does not seem worthy of the inspiration?

L. WENDELL ESHELMAN.
Oregon State College.

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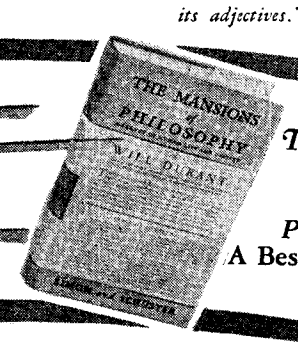

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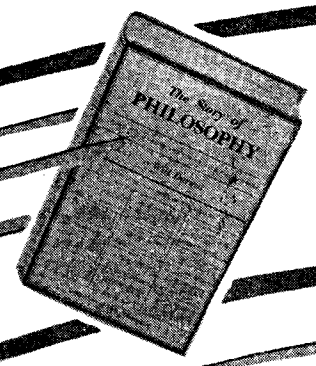

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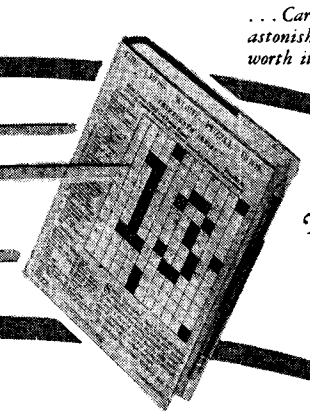

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